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Contents

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS 697
EDITORIALS:
Oil on Troubled Waters 700
What Business Wants 701
The Law and the Alien 701
Broadway Is Prosperous 702
ISSUES AND MEN. CLARK McADAMS. By Oswald Garrison Villard 703
CARTOON. By Fritz 704
THE MORTGAGE SCANDALS AND THE NEW DEAL. By Samuel Grafton 705
THE LATEST INVASION OF MEXICO. By Elizabeth Knowlton 707
THE FUTURE OF BRITISH LABOR. By Harold J. Laski . . . 708
CORPORATE TAMMANY HALLS. By Isidor Feinstein 710
CORRESPONDENCE 710
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE 712
LABOR AND INDUSTRY:
Craft and the Crafts. By Heywood Broun 713
The Wisconsin "People's Front." By Hans Christian 714
The Case for Industrial Unionism. By William Green 715
The Labor Index 715
Facts for Consumers. By Ruth Brindze 716
BOOKS, DRAMA, FILMS:
Our Critics, Right or Wrong. V. Literary Salesmen. By Margaret Marshall and Mary McCarthy 717
Karl Marx. By Ludwig Lore 719
Down with Woollcott. By Louis Kronenberger 720
warbly same boat. By Florence Codman 721
Roosevelt as Rentier. By Paul W. Ward 721
Drama: The Unregenerated. By Joseph Wood Krutch 722
Films: The Old Days. By Mark Van Doren 724

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THREE WEEKS' NOTICE AND THE OLD ADDRESS AS WELL AS THE NEW ARE REQUIRED FOR CHANGE OF SUBSCRIBER'S ADDRESS.

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NO MOVE that the United States could have taken at the London naval conference would have appeared more hypocritical than the proposal for a reduction of 20 per cent in total tonnage. The Administration must have known that it would be rejected. In view of the recently announced increases in the French and Italian navies and the threat of new German construction, Britain is in no mood to consider reduction. Any suggestion that presupposes the continuation of the present ratios is a red rag to the Japanese. Since the United States is farther below its quota than any of the other powers, a cut would be much less expensive for this country than for Great Britain or Japan. It is obvious that no agreement is to be achieved unless the American delegation faces the issues realistically. Either we must give way to Japan's demand for parity or we must enter into a collective agreement for maintaining the status quo in the East. If we desire disarmament—as vast numbers of Americans do—we must show our sincerity by offering to make concessions far greater than those we ask of other nations. And why not? No country has greater natural security than the United States. A navy for purely defensive purposes would be but a fraction of the size of our present fleet. If our naval force were reduced to defensive size, other countries would find it much easier to make reductions. Apart from the protection of our imperialistic interests—which mean very little to most Americans—is there any reason why we should not take the first step?

SHOULD MUSSOLINI ACCEPT the new "peace" plan drafted by Sir Samuel Hoare and Premier Laval, the League's efforts to build a system of collective security would be effectively sabotaged. Ostensibly the scheme calls for an "exchange of territory" between Italy and Ethiopia. Italy is to be offered an area equaling approximately half of Ethiopia, while the African kingdom is to receive in return a narrow strip of territory leading to the port of Assab in Eritrea. Included in the land which is being offered Mussolini is a vast tract of fertile highland country, said to be highly suitable for colonization by Europeans. The proposal goes far beyond the ill-fated plan drafted by the Committee of Five prior to the outbreak of hostilities, and would give Mussolini more than his armies would be able to conquer—at their present rate of progress—for many months. That Laval has wished to "satisfy" Mussolini has long been evident, but Hoare's approval, unless overridden by the Cabinet, can only mean that Baldwin has deliberately deceived millions of pro-League voters who gave him a specific mandate last month. Doubtless the unholy scheme will be defended on the ground that it removes the threat of an immediate war in Europe. Actually, however, the chance that Mussolini, weakened by the check to his armies in Ethiopia and harassed by sanctions, would attack England and France together is extremely remote. The primary danger of war in Europe lies in Hitler's widely heralded thrust toward the East. If Mussolini obtains his empire by defying the League, all hope of that agency's restraining Hitler will have vanished.

LAVAL'S POSITION as a mediator between Italy and Great Britain has been strengthened by his somewhat unexpected triumphs at home. Owing to the Radical Socialists' unwillingness to assume responsibility for the devaluation of the franc, Laval's fiscal policies were approved by a substantial if grudging majority. The attack on the government for its leniency toward the Croix de Feu and other fascist organizations proved more difficult to withstand. But after three days' heated discussion a formula was found which satisfied all but the extreme left parties. The so-called defense organizations, both of the right and of the left, are to be dissolved and denied the right to reorganize using uniforms, insignia, or arms. Anyone caught carrying a revolver to a public meeting is to be subject to a heavy sentence, and any individual or journal responsible for provoking political crime is to be dealt with severely. As a result of this agreement, not only the Laval government but democracy itself is given a new breathing spell in France; the chances seem now distinctly against a fascist coup d'etat before the elections in May. Once that hurdle is surmounted, France should return to a left government which is representative of the views of the majority of the population.

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THE FIGHT to keep the United States out of the Berlin Olympic games has just begun! The strength of the non-participation sentiment was indicated in the A. A. U. convention on December 8 when the vote by the union itself for adoption of the Steuer amendment urging further investigation in Germany was 54¾ to 43¼; when the vote of the allied organizations was added to the count, however, the proposal was lost by 2½ votes. Jeremiah T. Mahoney, in withdrawing from the post of president and from the special committees of which he was a member, including the American Olympic Committee, announced that he would prosecute the non-participation movement with all the forces at his command, and would refuse to support campaigns for Olympic funds. The difficulty of raising the large sums necessary to send athletes to Berlin may be the final obstacle which the proponents of participation cannot overcome. For it is becoming plainer every day that there is a real opposition which is not confined to Jewish or Catholic groups but includes many thousands of persons who, without any racial or religious stake in the matter, are intensely eager for the traditions of international sport to be upheld. This opposition is evidently nation-wide and it gathers strength and numbers every day. That the pro-participation forces in the A. A. U. recognized the nature of this protest is evidenced by their struggle to keep the issue from coming to a vote. Mr. Brundage, the new A. A. U. president, announced that the matter is now settled; but it is not settled, nor will it be as long as advocates of fair play in sports have a voice.

POSTMASTER GENERAL FARLEY has finally canceled a ship-subsidy contract—one of the three held by the United Fruit Company for the service between New Orleans and Puerto Colombia. Farley has proudly announced that the company has agreed to carry the mails on a straight poundage basis, and that the cancelation will save the government about $4,000,000—approximately $544,000 having been paid out on a $4,571,658 contract. This, however, is not such good news as it at first seems to be. The real facts of the matter are set forth in a report on the United Fruit subsidies submitted early this year to President Roosevelt by Farley himself. First of all, the United Fruit itself has for some time been trying to have the contract canceled—a small one compared to the other two, which will have yielded the company nearly $16,000,000. Cancelation was requested because the contract provided that two new ships, costing about $7,000,000, should be constructed by next March. One may still ask why the other two contracts were not canceled. All three of them were awarded through the most flagrant and unconscionable collusion, and in Farley's own words, they "are therefore illegal." The United Fruit's Washington lobbyist was Elisha Hanson, who also hires out to the publishers. He earned his money. The contract advertisements so carefully specified the characteristics of the then existing United Fruit services that no other lines could possibly enter bids. Needless to say, the $150,000,000 United Fruit Company never had the slightest right to any subsidy: its profits were large, even during the depression; the lines it operated were industrial lines, carrying bananas principally; of its ninety-five ships sixty-four were actually flying foreign flags; the personnel was interchangeable between the foreign and American ships, and the wages, hours, and living scales were the same. These conditions still obtain. It is worth noting that Farley's estimate of the savings to the government through the present cancelation is misleading: the $4,000,000 consists in large part of the greatly increased subsidies that would have gone to the line had the new and faster vessels been constructed.

DISAFFECTION in the ranks of the Socialist Party has been brewing for a long time. It is a healthy sign that at last it has taken the form of action in the recent withdrawal from the New York Central Committee of Norman Thomas and the left-wing group. Mr. Thomas withdrew after the introduction of a resolution which proposed to "reorganize" the party—with the leftists omitted. Louis Waldman, Socialist state chairman, read Mr. Thomas and his supporters out of the party at a meeting at the Rand School on December 8. But the national party organization has voted to send an official delegation to the left-wing convention in Utica on December 27, which would seem to indicate that Mr. Waldman is without the fold and Mr. Thomas is safely inside. The split has been occasioned in part by a difference of opinion over the proper Socialist attitude toward Soviet Russia and over the more immediate question of a united front with the Communists. The Old Guard charges the left-wing faction with "efforts to commit the party to policies of armed insurrection, force, and violence." The left wing answers this highly colored accusation by saying: "We are loyal Socialists who accept the constitution, declaration of principles, and platform of the Socialist Party and utterly reject control from Moscow. . . . What we want is not to make the Socialist Party Communist but . . . Socialist and efficient, something which it is not and has not been under the control of the Old Guard in New York City." The split should prove distinctly beneficial if it leads to closer cooperation between the two leading radical parties, and hastens the formation of a national labor party.

THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS, which a year ago studiously avoided the implication of the income-tax figures, has shown ill-concealed glee in pointing out that the reduction in the number of million-dollar incomes from forty-six to thirty-two during the past year indicates a "redistribution of wealth" downward. On the surface there appears to be some justification for this claim. The number of individuals in each income class above $100,000 declined, while the number in each of the brackets below $100,000 increased. The total income of those receiving over a million dollars in 1933 was $82,000,000; in 1934 it was only $57,000,000. To assume from these figures that the New Deal has aided the masses at the expense of the classes would, however, be faulty mathematics. Surely no one would maintain that American families which receive from $10,000 to $100,000 a year—less than ½ of 1 per cent of the total number—can be included among the "little fellows." Yet the number in this group increased from 89,000 in 1933 to 129,000 in 1934. The number of individuals receiving $10,000 a year or more rose more than 33 per cent as compared with the previous year, while the total net income of the 5 per cent of the population whose income was sufficiently high to be taxable increased 15 per cent over 1933. The decline in the highest brackets may well be entirely accounted for by changes in the capital-gains section of the 1934 law which permitted a taxpayer to report only a fraction of his gains if the property

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had been held for a period of years. When we consider that the average weekly wage of industrial workers was only 1 per cent higher in 1934 than in 1932, it will be seen that New Deal communism is yet a long way off.

ARMED WITH NEW POWERS making him virtual dictator of Nanking's rapidly dwindling domain, Chiang Kai-shek has apparently struck a deal with Tokyo by which China retains nominal and Japan assumes actual control of the Peiping-Tientsin area. The details of the new arrangement are not yet available, but the Japanese insist that the independent government of Hopei and Chahar will exercise full authority over all foreign, financial, military, and juridical affairs. Although the new "state" is considerably smaller than that originally planned by the Japanese militarists, Japanese jingoism has won another substantial victory. Spurred by the unexpected strength of the League in the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, Chinese public opinion had been demanding a showdown. Great Britain and the United States, with substantial interests in North China, had taken a definite stand against further Japanese penetration in violation of the Nine-Power Treaty. All of this potential opposition has been sidetracked, however, by the facts that the new regime will have the official blessing of Nanking and that it will remain nominally a part of China. Secretary Hull's statement to the press reiterating America's "faith in the fundamental principles of its traditional policies," while mild in tone, was welcome as an indication of our continued interest in the Far East. By itself, however, the United States can do nothing, unless it wants to go to war. If Japanese imperialism is to be curbed, it can only be through collective action.

THE CAPITALIST WORLD used to object to Bolshevik propaganda. It still does when that suits its special purposes—in a pre-election period, for instance. But now Bolshevik propaganda is entering a new phase in which the capitalists either pay for it or are paid for it. Thus the Turkish and Persian governments have contracted with Moscow to build modern industrial plants for them. That impresses the Orientals. They see Russia as Asia's new industrial leader. Soviet engineers, workers, and machines help them improve their lot. Nothing could be more effective pro-Soviet propaganda. And its cost to the Kremlin is nil. Indeed, there is even a financial profit. In the West the crafty Bolsheviks have adopted a method of propaganda which is still more subtle. During the first ten months of 1935 the Soviet government purchased seventy second-hand ships, totaling 250,000 tons, in foreign countries, mostly Germany and Holland. But it bought them on one condition. The seller was obliged to tear out the cramped, tight, dark quarters for the crew in the lower decks and put in roomy, pleasant cabins in the best part of the vessels for the Soviet sailors. Seamen are an international lot, and this innovation will be carried by them to every corner of the world. In the bars of Shanghai, in the dives of Buenos Aires, German and British and Norwegian salts will be talking about the wonderful accommodations which the Bolsheviks provide their sailors. Even the London City is being bombarded with a new type of propaganda. The bankers and business men of England are impressed by the fact that in 1935 the Soviet government paid cash for literally all its orders in Great Britain. This is the real red menace, and it has obviously been in preparation for a long time. We suspect, in fact, that the first and second Five-Year Plans were conceived as parts of it.

TWO IMPORTANT COMPLAINTS have been recently issued by the National Labor Relations Board under the Wagner Labor Disputes Act. The first of these is directed against the Associated Press for discharging and refusing to reinstate Morris Watson for joining the American Newspaper Guild. The case will be heard on January 8, and an answer by the Associated Press may be filed before that time. The board has also decided, in the case of the Pennsylvania Greyhound Lines, that the company has violated the law by forbidding its employees to organize and bargain collectively, and has ordered the reinstatement of discharged employees with back pay and the dissolution of the company union which the bus line had formed as a substitute for the labor union its employees wanted. Ivan Bowen, attorney for the company, has announced that no recognition will be given to the order of the board until it has been "passed upon by a court of competent jurisdiction." The United States Circuit Court of Appeals is the court in question, and it should be given an opportunity to review the order without delay. Such a test of the Wagner law cannot come too soon. It is evident that the momentum given by the NIRA to the processes of collective bargaining is slowing down. Few cases have come before the labor boards, and such decisions as have been handed down have been defied or ignored by the companies against whom they have been issued. Both of the preceding cases appear to be clear-cut violations of the law; the question to be determined now is whether or not there is a law to violate.

THE CHAIN GANG cannot yet claim Angelo Herndon. An application for a writ of habeas corpus on the ground that the statute under which Herndon was convicted was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment was acted on by Judge Hugh M. Dorsey in Fulton County Superior Court on December 7. Judge Dorsey ruled that the statute was in fact unconstitutional and that Herndon's conviction and sentence, therefore, were "illegal, void, and of no effect." Herndon is out on $8,000 bail for a twenty-day period during which the state may appeal the case to the Georgia Supreme Court. If it does, the Supreme Court of the United States may be expected to rule on it at last. A mere layman, of course, should hesitate to express an opinion on judicial processes, particularly with respect to the court of last resort. But if the Georgia insurrection statute is unconstitutional now, it was so while the Supreme Court was twice ruling that the issue of constitutionality had not been properly raised. Mr. Justice Cardozo, in a dissenting opinion, indicated that the technicality on which the court refused to take jurisdiction was a finely drawn one; that it was drawn meant months in jail for the defendant, and more months are still ahead of him while the final appeal goes through its measured paces. Months, however, are undoubtedly better than years. In a comparatively short time Herndon may be free. His years in jail have made him many friends and have demonstrated the strength of the mass protest which as much as anything helped his cause to be celebrated and his freedom to be a matter of public concern.

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Oil on Troubled Waters

FOR years the scramble of the powers for possession of the world's oil reserves has been recognized as a probable factor in the next world war. With the exception of the United States and the Soviet Union, none of the leading countries have anything like an adequate supply of petroleum within their own boundaries. Great Britain has overcome its natural deficiency by its control of rich fields in Iraq, Persia, the East Indies, and Mexico, but the other great industrial nations, notably Germany, France, and Italy, are almost completely dependent on imports. That this inequitable distribution of one of the world's most necessary raw materials should be a cause of international friction and animosity was only to be expected. That it might become one of the primary factors in establishing an effective system of international organization was foreseen by no one.

Yet it can scarcely be denied that the subject of oil has become the pivot around which all hope of building a system of collective security turns. The sanctions which the League has thus far imposed against Italy can only be fully effective after a considerable period of time. Meanwhile, Mussolini has virtually a free hand to push his campaign in Ethiopia. Should he conquer a large portion of the country before the next rainy season sets in, the chances are that he will be able to obtain even more favorable peace terms than are now offered him by Laval and Hoare. Japan's occupation of Manchuria has shown how difficult it is to exercise effective pressure against an aggressor after it has obtained the fruits of aggression. If Italy is to be made to furnish an example of the unprofitableness of war in violation of international law, the existing sanctions must be materially strengthened. And no step is likely to bring Italy to its knees more quickly than the inclusion of oil among the commodities which are to be barred from the aggressor. Modern warfare simply cannot be conducted without an ample supply of petroleum products. The Italian armies in the deserts of Ethiopia depend on motor transport for their food, water, and munitions. Tanks and aeroplanes are useless without gasoline and lubricating oil. A large number of Italy's merchant and naval ships are oil burning. Italy itself produces no petroleum, and only a very restricted amount is obtained from Albania. For its remaining supplies it is wholly dependent on League powers and the United States. Rumania and the Soviet Union, two of its largest suppliers, have definitely declared themselves in favor of an embargo. Great Britain, controlling the Iraq fields, has also indicated that it will support such action at the meeting of the League Sanctions Committee on December 12.

The hesitancy with which the League has viewed a step which, if successful, should firmly establish the principle of collective security is attributable to two factors: (1) fear that Mussolini will be driven to war against the "sanctionist" powers; and (2) anxiety lest the United States—the only non-League power in a position to export oil in large quantities—furnish Mussolini with the petroleum required to wage his illegal campaign. Both dangers are real ones. But it is difficult to believe that Il Duce has so lost his reason that he would embark on a hopeless war against England and France and the other League powers. Uncertainty regarding America's policy has been more important as a restraining factor.

The report that the Standard Oil Company had agreed to supply Italy's war requirements in exchange for a thirty-year monopoly has dramatized a very real danger. We are not in a position to pass judgment on the accuracy of this report. As was shown in the celebrated Rickett case, the mere fact that certain Standard Oil officers have made a denial is not to be taken as conclusive. It so happens, for example, that on the same day that the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey was issuing its pious statement declaring that it had turned down Italian war orders, the Vacuum Oil Company, an affiliate of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, was reported to have completed arrangements for the construction of a modern oil refinery at Naples at a cost of six million dollars. But even accepting Standard's protestations of innocence at their face value, the fact remains that this company has declared that it intends to do business with Italy until the government takes drastic steps to prevent such transactions. The President, Secretary Hull, and Secretary Ickes have each urged on several occasions that American firms dealing in "war materials" should refrain from trade with either Italy or Ethiopia. Nevertheless, American exports of crude oil to Italy rose over 400 per cent in October.

The Administration's position is seriously weakened by the fact that it has no authority to enforce its policy on American business interests which wish to trade with the belligerent countries. Uncertain of public support, it has weakly assumed that the "implements-of-war" clause in the neutrality resolution could not be stretched to include such essential raw materials as oil, scrap iron, and cotton. The only step which the government has taken thus far to enforce its policy has been that of exerting pressure on companies owing money to the Shipping Board not to deliver oil to Italy. This action has admittedly proved ineffective, largely because the Administration has no control over mortgagors who are in good standing. According to the latest statement of loans in default, only two tanker companies are in arrears. These are the American Tankers Corporation and the National Motorship Corporation—the Sun Oil Company.

Unless the Administration is willing to allow a handful of oil companies to obstruct the League in its determined effort to substitute law for anarchy, it must take action under the "implements-of-war" clause or seek immediate legislation empowering the President to restrict the sale of war materials to belligerents. To wait until the regular session of Congress would be fatal, not only because it would give Mussolini at least another month's supply of oil, but because it would create vested interests in this country which would fight tooth and nail against any effort to curtail their profits. Three years ago the Administration found power to launch its recovery program by invoking emergency legislation passed during the World War. Today another emergency exists which may have an even greater effect on history than that of 1933. The effort to create a world organization capable of enforcing peace may fail, but it must not be because the United States neglected to carry its share of the burden.

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What Business Wants

A GOOD case can be made for the thesis that the protection of private property in the Constitution provided, at the time it was written, adequate safeguards for the individual. The acquisition of property was open to all, and property once obtained was individually controlled. As long as a continent, fabulously rich in lands and resources, remained to be filled, the basic law protecting property protected in some measure the equality of individual opportunity. With the advance of the Industrial Revolution the nature of property changed. The corporation began to take the place of the person, the individual control over property began to decline, and an individualist civilization gave way to the capitalistic era. The basic law of the Constitution was stretched by the Supreme Court to protect the new kind of property. The due-process clause of the Constitution and states' rights became the new charter of business. Even so, business, in demanding its complete independence, submitted itself to the stringent economic laws of laissez faire; it took its losses, it maintained a free market, and on the whole it fostered competition. The frontier still was moving, and the individual still had the freedom of the beckoning West.

Then came the turn of the century and the rapid emergence of finance capitalism. Corporation property ceased to be private in any sense of the owners' personal control over it, and corporate interests began to coalesce, to the point that today 200 corporations control 60 per cent of the corporate wealth in the country. At the same time business undertook to evade the stern principles of laissez faire. It undermined competition by mergers and market agreements, it promoted the utterly uncapitalistic doctrine of price stability, and finally in the depression it refused to take its losses and insisted on being bailed out by government money. Hoover and Roosevelt spent billions to sustain property values, and both have preached the revolutionary doctrine of price stability. Thus property is no longer individual, and its possession no longer expresses accurately what Madison would recognize as the unequal faculties in man. It has a nationally acknowledged claim on the Treasury for its security, and it raises a problem not dreamed of by the writers of the Constitution or by the Supreme Court in the latter part of the last century.

The chief political struggle in the country is to gain public control over this new type of property through the government, since it no longer can be controlled individually. Business now invokes for finance property the freedom guaranteed to individual property by the Constitution and to the property of competing corporations by the Supreme Court in the days of laissez faire.

The National Association of Manufacturers at its annual meeting knew this to be the issue, but hid it behind this language: "Whether collectivism or a dictatorship shall succeed our representative constitutional democracy." Even in this language the issue is clear. The government, which in the new era must bail out business, make it safe, and stabilize the national economy, is not to control what it finances. For our "representative constitutional democracy" was notable as a hands-off-property regime from the start. The platform for American industry adopted by the N. A. M. is explicit beyond any possibility of misunderstanding. Five of the seven planks say "hands off" in five different modulations: plank two—"the limitation of government power over business"; plank three—"divorce of politics from bank or credit regulation"; plank four—"curtailment of expenditure to the proper and necessary functions of government"; plank five—"prevention of destructive taxation"; plank six—"maintenance of constitutional guaranty."

Of the remaining planks one is for the return to the gold standard and another for "greater freedom of enterprise," whatever that may mean. The N. A. M. resolved to work for the repeal of unemployment insurance and uniform old-age pensions as being "of a depressional character" and impracticable. In another resolution it attacked the government for "setting labor against industry." So bold a claim for the right to rule without check could not be made in a fascist state, and it can be made in America only so long as the Supreme Court feels it is bound to ignore the transformation in the nature of property. The pretense of the N. A. M. that the constitutional safeguards for property were designed for, or must be applied to, the interlocked corporate holdings which are typical of today's finance seems to us an unpardonable affront to American traditions.

Commenting on the seven-plank platform, Lammot du Pont declared: "We can truthfully state that by following these principles our country can make way for reemployment and prosperity." The seven principles we note were all loyally observed during the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era. They produced the depression. Yet they remain all that these business men know or feel they need to know of a social order.

The Law and the Alien

WHEN Congress meets early in January, one of the first things on the agenda will be consideration of anti-alien legislation in various forms. A number of bills were introduced at the last session with nothing to recommend them but the intemperate "patriotism" of persons who believe that an alien, *per se,* is an undesirable character and ought to go back where he came from. The overwhelming sentiment in the national legislature and perhaps in the country as a whole has been for strengthening rather than tempering our already stringent anti-alien laws; year by year interpretation of immigration legislation, fortified by court decision, has moved in the direction of less discretion on the part of the Department of Labor, charged with the enforcement of the statute, until in most respects the procedure is entirely mandatory and the immigration authorities have no choice but to deport aliens who fall into certain classes.

In an attempt somewhat to modify this harsh and short-sighted procedure, the Department of Labor is sponsoring the Kerr bill, which endows the Immigration Bureau with discretion in certain cases. The bill is designed to alleviate, in the cases of aliens of good moral character, the severity and injustice which have operated to separate wives from husbands, parents from children, and in too many cases to disregard the common usages of humanity. Aliens who originally entered the country without inspection but who are no longer subject to deportation may in certain cases be permitted to regularize their residence and become citizens. Students and

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visitors who, although admitted temporarily, are subsequently entitled to permanent residence may at the discretion of the department be permitted to remain without the inconvenience of first having to leave the country. In cases of illegal entry, where the procedure has been to detain aliens for indeterminate periods at the pleasure of the local or federal authorities, arrest is regularized, and an alien cannot be held for more than twenty-four hours without a warrant. Criminal aliens under the Kerr bill would be subjected to harsher treatment than is now accorded them; provision is made for the deportation of any alien convicted of possessing or carrying any concealed or dangerous weapon—with the amendment that he must have been convicted of a crime.

It will be seen that the proposed bill does go a certain way toward the modification of laws which have too often seemed inexplicably harsh. It is concerned mainly with the vast majority of deportation cases—those, for example, in which an alien has entered the country unlawfully or has a criminal record. It does not touch in any way the minority cases, which are of most interest to persons who like to think of America as an asylum for political refugees or a place where speech and thought are not subject to prohibitory legislation. During the years 1925 to 1935, 218 persons were deported who were classed as "dangerous radicals"—in contrast, of course, to the many thousands who fell into other classifications. In 1932 there were fifty-one such deportees; in 1933, seventy-four; in 1934, twenty; and so far in 1935 there have been seventeen. Although in numbers these cases are insignificant, in principle they are the most important. None of the legislation so far proposed would give the Immigration Bureau discretion in cases of this sort; under the present law membership in the Communist Party is mandatory ground for deportation. For an alien to ally himself with any group suspected of Communist affiliations—from the Unemployed Councils to the Federal Council of Churches, which "The Red Network" classes as dangerous—is a risky business if he happens to live in a community suffering from unemployed demonstrations, a conspicuous picket line, or any other challenge to the status quo. Jittery local officials do not like aliens who make a disturbance. They do not like citizens ditto, but citizens are harder to deal with. The alien needs special protection if he is to enjoy the citizen's share of traditional American rights.

It is fitting, therefore, to credit the Department of Labor with its sponsorship of the Kerr bill and to urge that the bill itself be passed as speedily as possible. It is equally fitting to suggest additional legislation, or a modification of existing legislation, which would permit departmental discretion in cases of political deportees. There have been an uncomfortable number of deportation cases in which cause and effect have too neatly operated: the cause being some sort of championship of simple rights, like the right to eat, or work, or picket, or organize in a labor union, and the effect the shipping off of an alien to the country of his origin, where he would be unwelcome, or strange, or even in danger of death. It is perhaps too much to ask that a Department of Labor, trying to bring a little humanity into the immigration laws against the hostility of an anti-alien Congress, should propose such legislation. But the pressure of public opinion should be exerted on the Congress itself, in an attempt to secure the same legal rights for aliens that are now granted to citizens.

Broadway Is Prosperous

EVER since the moving picture established itself as the most popular form of mass entertainment, the theatrical business has been part of the luxury trade. Certain special audiences have been built up by one or two insurgent groups, but "Broadway" depends almost exclusively upon those who can afford high-priced tickets. Nevertheless, Broadway is booming again, and its prosperity doubtless indicates a return either of better times or, at least, of confidence "in the higher brackets."

No business suffered more in the early days of the depression. Overbuilding, even for boom days, got those producers who were interested in real estate hopelessly involved, and when the Shuberts went into bankruptcy Broadway thought that the end of the world had come. At the same time audiences dwindled, production fell off, and there was one year during which gloomy wiseacres prophesied the end of New York as a great theatrical center. Today, however, it is deliriously prosperous. That does not mean, of course, that the death-rate is not high. Even in the palmiest days something like 80 per cent of all productions lost money. But that is taken for granted; it is hits that count, and at the moment there are fifteen current plays established in the money-making class.

"Jumbo" tops the list with takings of about $69,000 for the last week in November. As usual, other musical shows, including "Porgy and Bess," achieved the highest gross receipts, but there are eleven highly prosperous plays, among which "Pride and Prejudice" takes the lead. As *Variety*, from which these statistics are taken, points out, last year produced only thirteen hits, or two less than have appeared during the first third of the present season. It is also worthy of note that the successes are by no means to be found only among the lighter or more obviously "popular" offerings. Several, like "First Lady" and "Boy Meets Girl," are more or less frivolous and merely colloquial comedies, but others, like "Pride and Prejudice," "Winterset," and the two holdovers, "The Children's Hour" and "Tobacco Road," are not what is ordinarily called sure-fire theater. Neither, for that matter, is "The Taming of the Shrew."

Another interesting phenomenon is the growing extent to which the moving-picture companies are helping to finance plays which they hope may later prove suitable for screening. A great deal has been said about the possible bad effect upon the stage of Hollywood subsidies, and offhand the danger would seem to be great. Undoubtedly the moving-picture industry has done the theater a great deal of harm by luring many of its most promising actors away and also by employing too much of the energy of outstanding playwrights. There would seem, also, to be a real danger that the stage might become a mere "feeder" to the movies. And yet it must be admitted that so far the record is less than conclusive, largely, no doubt, because the movie magnates still seem to be in a state where they do not know exactly what they want. Warner Brothers has an interest in "Boy Meets Girl," which has obvious picture possibilities, but the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer company is interested in "First Lady," "Pride and Prejudice," and "Winterset." All three are plays which the stage is lucky to get.

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Issues and Men

Clark McAdams

ONE of the few remaining great American journalists died the other day in St. Louis. Clark McAdams, for years the editor of the *Post-Dispatch* of that city, combined in himself all the qualities needed by the head of a fearless, independent, and unfettered newspaper. He wielded a remarkably able pen; he was responsible and conscientious; he was courageous and a devoted patriot in the best sense of that much-abused word. A great liberal—he could not have served on the *Post-Dispatch* as anything else—he clung to that philosophy of life, unshaken by untoward events and the complete eclipse of liberalism in many countries, because of his unbounded faith in human nature and his lofty ideals. His heart responded to every appeal of the underprivileged as that of any honest editor should, and when it came to a clear-cut case of injustice his whole being vibrated in response.

But nature's bounty to Clark McAdams did not stop there. Other gifted men similarly situated have been denied, like Horace Greeley, the saving ingredient of humor; or, if they had it, have suppressed it, like Edwin L. Godkin, in favor of their supreme control of the weapons of sarcasm and irony. McAdams's rare humor was part of his own kindly outlook upon life, which nothing could shake since it was but the reflection of his essential nobility and generosity of soul. At his funeral Dean Otto Heller of Washington University said of him: "And how could his attitude have been other than friendly to all the world, when with all his soul he believed in working for the general good? He was the most socially conscious person of his community. Never have I known one more closely related to the whole life of mankind and so infallibly on the side of the angels." It was doubtless Mr. McAdams's very kindliness that kept him from the mistake others of us are too prone to fall into—of criticizing individuals more than the system. But that did not weaken his pen or render it less effective. His hot indignation was not to be restrained when there were obvious evil-doers to be lashed. No one who read them can forget his leaders on the rascalities of the Harding Administration or his level-headed, luminous analyses of the Ohio gang revelations, which the *Post-Dispatch* and its brilliant Washington staff did more than any other one journal to spread abroad.

It is hardly surprising that the staff of the *Post-Dispatch* gave Mr. McAdams undivided loyalty and affection. They knew better than anyone else his selflessness, his absorption in his task, his devotion to the public weal. They knew that he did not take a position until he had fought his way through to it by the most careful reasoning, and that then, such was his clear integrity, he could not be shaken or driven into retreat. He could not be "reached," and he would not compromise. When the New Deal suddenly came to pass and Mr. Roosevelt held out that vision of a reorganized America which he has so unhappily failed to achieve, Mr. McAdams threw himself into the fight for it with the hot enthusiasm of youth. The more he studied it and realized its possibilities the greater his enthusiasm, the more eloquent his championship of the new promise and its sponsor.

When this led to a parting of the ways with the ownership of the *Post-Dispatch* and his transfer to the role of contributing editor, he met this supreme test with a self-control and bravery of which few could be capable. In justice it must be set down here, however, that Clark McAdams was in considerable degree what his opportunity and the *Post-Dispatch* made him. After becoming chief editorial writer he had for some years complete freedom of utterance. He was warmly backed by the then unlimited liberalism of the Pulitzer ownership, which even today is far more liberal than that of most journals and can still boast of an unsurpassed group of honest idealists in its editorial rooms. In other words, Mr. McAdams's setting was for years precisely what was necessary for the development of a great editorial figure—a milieu in which a man could champion any cause he espoused with unrestrained ardor and without having to go hat in hand to some absentee owner to ask for permission to say what he thought. In no other atmosphere can we hope to breed the successors of the great journalists of the past.

That, from the point of view of the profession, is the moral of Clark McAdams's life. He would be the first to say that others like him could be found without difficulty, if only they could be assured of the opportunity that he so richly enjoyed. When people ask me as I journey around the country why it is that the great personalities have so nearly disappeared in journalism, and why there is not a single nationally known daily editorial writer on a New York newspaper, with the exception of one who has prostituted his talents to a base service, the answer is that the responsibility lies with the owners of the dailies. They can create the conditions which for so many years made the offices of the *Post-Dispatch* and the New York *World* and the old *Evening Post,* the Baltimore *Suns,* and many others the resort of brilliant and fearless men and unhampered writers with a message to deliver. It is still possible to point to the *Post-Dispatch,* the Baltimore *Sun,* and some other newspapers where these conditions more or less continue. And everywhere I go I meet in newspaper offices aspiring and eager young men longing to get out of an intellectual servitude they cannot bear into one of the offices in which men can be free and earn enough to support their wives and children.

Even so, the Clark McAdamses are rare. "No station in life," Dean Heller also said, "requires more steadiness and purity of motive than the editorship of a great newspaper; and there is none that puts those qualities to a severer strain. But the manhood of Clark McAdams as a publicist proved equal to any test." After all, freedom to write what one thinks cannot alone produce such a man. The right qualities—the virtues, the philosophy, the pure ideals, the love of liberty and of humanity—must be there, too.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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"Can't we find a common basis for a gentleman's agreement?"

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The Mortgage Scandals and the New Deal

By SAMUEL GRAFTON

IT is hardly a month since the newspapers carried the announcement that President Roosevelt had lifted up one Lamar Hardy to the substantial post of United States Attorney for the Southern New York District, and that he had also, on the same day, elevated one John J. Kelly to the position of United States Marshal for the same area. Those who follow such matters carefully had also noted the appointment, a day or two before, of Max D. Steuer as counsel for the Congressional (Sabath) committee investigating real-estate-bondholders' reorganization committees. The three appointments occasioned a considerable amount of discussion in several quarters of the metropolis, ranging from the offices of distinguished Wall Street lawyers to the well-known back rooms of a dozen Tammany clubs. Something, the theory was, lay at the bottom of all this. It took the better-informed a day or two to fill in the picture. Those who see it all now are suffering from that bleakness of spirit which comes to men who have looked upon wonders that mortals ought never to behold.

What they see cannot be put in a nutshell, either. The Hardy-Kelly-Steuer appointments are but three tarnished threads in a rich and varied political tapestry. Concealed in its folds are matters as diverse as (a) President Roosevelt's desire to be reelected next year, (b) the "guaranteed"-mortgage-certificate scandals, involving 300,000 investors and one and a half billions of investments, (c) the split between Tammany and the Administration, (d) the scandals attending many real-estate-bond reorganizations, (e) the decreasing importance of Leader Dooling and the increasing power of the James J. Hines (of Harlem)–Edward J. Flynn (of the Bronx)–Farley bloc in the Manhattan Democratic organization, and (f) the Administration's plans to take that organization over before the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1936. The civics books say that appointments to high law-administration posts should be conceived in the desire for effective law enforcement, and no such desire is listed above. The trouble is that civics books are written for the ages, while Presidential and Congressional committee appointments are made with an eye on the election calendar.

J. J. Dooling, leader of Tammany Hall, did not want Lamar Hardy appointed United States Attorney for the metropolitan area. Mr. Dooling did not want John J. Kelly named United States Marshal, for the position carries heavy patronage authority. Mr. Dooling had other candidates for the two jobs. But there will be an upheaval shortly in Tammany, and Mr. Dooling stands an excellent chance of losing his own job. Whoever replaces him will be a most important figure in the coming Presidential election, and those who have the most patronage will be in the best position to dictate the choice of his successor. Mr. Kelly starts with several natural advantages, not even including the fact that he heads an advertising agency in which Elliott Roosevelt is a partner. He is one of the Tammany leaders who function under "Jimmy" Hines, in opposition to Mr. Dooling. He himself has been mentioned prominently as the next leader of the Hall and is willing to make whatever sacrifices would be entailed in order to carry the torch. Lamar Hardy's connections with the higher Democratic politics arise through the medium of Edward J. Flynn, Democratic boss of the Bronx, and Governor Lehman's Secretary of State. Mr. Hardy, a distinguished and able lawyer, has long had business contacts with Mr. Flynn, and it is those contacts which, in a way, provide the drama of this piece. Of that, more later. The point to keep in mind here is that by throwing these two appointments to the segment of the Democratic organization opposed to the present Tammany leadership, that leadership becomes subjected to a policy of attrition. By careful placing of their patronage, Messrs. Hardy and Kelly can wean away one of Mr. Dooling's props after another, and can thus convert a regiment of the Tammany faithful to the truth, the light, and Jimmy Hines. Now let us return to Mr. Hardy, whose case cries aloud for individual treatment.

The biggest financial scandal in the history of the state of New York is the "guaranteed"-mortgage-certificate bubble. No financial bust on record approaches the one and a half billion dollars of small investors' money tied up in these certificates. The Moreland Commission, which looked into these affairs at the request of Governor Lehman just a year ago, returned a report that was an indictment of the whole top section of our financial community. One of the companies most severely criticized by George W. Alger of the Moreland Commission was the State Title and Mortgage Company. Twenty-five former directors of that company are being sued by the state Insurance Department for $5,000,000 for making "unlawful, unsafe, and unsound" loans to affiliated and subsidiary companies. One of those directors is Lamar Hardy, who is also a founder, former counsel, and chairman of the executive committee of the company.

As United States Attorney for the Wall Street sector, Mr. Hardy will have among his duties the prosecution of violations of the vast new body of securities and banking legislation framed by the New Deal to bring the more abundant life to the small investor. From the time he helped found the State Title and Mortgage Company in 1927 until he severed his connection with it in October, 1931, Mr. Hardy had the fortunes of a great many small investors at least partly in his care, but they don't seem to have profited greatly by it. It is on record that the State Title and Mortgage Company was called on the carpet by the Insurance Department in 1931 for correction of "an unsound condition." It is on record that long before the state took over the company an Insurance Department examiner reported that "the company is not observing the law . . . and the situation is terribly involved in intercorporate relations."

In a survey of the report returned by the Moreland Commission on October 5, 1934, the writer has found eighteen citations of the State Title and Mortgage Company for

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conduct that can be called questionable. John A. Dilliard, president of the company at the time it was taken over, is now valiantly appealing a jail sentence of six months for failing to disclose to investors the fact that, out of $4,091,698 of bonds and first mortgages listed among assets, $3,816,349 was already pledged as collateral on RFC loans. State Title and Mortgage, with $75,000,000 of "guaranteed" mortgages and certificates outstanding, could not maintain the ridiculously low guaranty fund of $5,300,000 required by law (two-thirds of its $8,300,000 capital). It reduced its capital to $5,000,000 and then to $1,000,000 in order to be able to reduce its guaranty fund—but its obligations were not reduced correspondingly. Ultimately, according to testimony taken, there was a guaranty fund of only $200,000 behind $75,000,000 of contingent liabilities.

We are most interested in what happened during Mr. Hardy's tenure. In 1929 State Title and Mortgage purchased a bank, which was operated thereafter as a wholly owned subsidiary under the name of the State Banking Company. When State Title needed cash, it would sell its mortgages to its own bank and repurchase them whenever the repurchase was advantageous, thus making the bank's depositors unwitting purchasers of these real-estate obligations. "A very nicely thought-out idea," said a bank examiner of this practice, "but an unsound one from the viewpoint of proper practice for an institution authorized to accept deposits." The State Banking Company opened an account with the Bank of United States, in November, 1930, a few weeks before the Bank of United States was taken over by the Banking Department. The bank examiners reported of this deposit: "This inactive deposit of $150,000 appears to have been maintained in violation of Section 290 of the penal law in that it has the earmarks of having been used to influence the Bank of United States to lend a substantial sum of money to one of the other subsidiaries of the National American Company" (a unit in the State Title and Mortgage chain).

In July, 1931, State Title and Mortgage decided to engage in a typical "swap" operation in connection with mortgages in its group series "C." "Swapping," as practiced by many of the companies, consisted of lifting out good mortgages against which a series of "guaranteed" certificates had been issued, and substituting others, which might or might not be as good. Investors who held the certificates rarely knew that any change had taken place in the portfolio of mortgages which supposedly backed their investment. The most frequent reason for "swapping" was the need for ready cash, and in those cases the most salable mortgages would be extracted, the less salable, or defaulted, mortgages substituted. In the group series "C" case, State Title wanted to withdraw the 134 mortgages on deposit, of which only 19 were in default, and to substitute a single mortgage on the Hotel Victoria annex—a mortgage that was past due. To do this legally the annex property had to be appraised at $2,500,000. An independent appraisal of the property at $1,925,000 was on file. The company's own appraisal, made in the prosperous year of 1929, stood at $2,250,000. But in the depression year 1931, a vice-president of the company, a lawyer who had never before appraised any hotel property, obligingly made an appraisal of $2,500,000, and the substitution was accomplished. That the hotel annex was doubtful security since it could not be operated by itself as a hotel without expensive alterations was a thought not allowed to influence the deal.

State Title and Mortgage Company was clearly guilty of most of the standard bad practices of the "guaranteed"-certificate business. It sold more than $27,000,000 of guaranties after its guaranty fund had been impaired to the extent of more than 50 per cent as of December 31, 1930. It boosted sales of certificates in series in which it acted as its own depositary, in preference to series in which there was an outside trustee. When a mortgage in a series was paid off, the company kept the money and put another mortgage into the group, instead of using the fund to pay off existing certificates. By a complicated series of intercorporate maneuvers, it put defaulted mortgages into the portfolios of an affiliate, made indirect loans to that affiliate, took this same money back from the affiliate as "interest" on the mortgages, and was thus enabled to record the interest as "paid." The Moreland report has served as the basis of state and federal indictments of a number of Mr. Hardy's associates, in addition to Mr. Dilliard. Since Mr. Hardy was chairman of the company's executive committee he either knew these practices were going on or he was extremely remiss in his duties.

Edward J. Flynn, boss of the Bronx, was named earlier in this article as Mr. Hardy's link with Democratic politics. New Yorkers may recall stories of the past two years concerning various crippled children who had recovered large money damages as the result of automobile-accident injuries, but who were now penniless because the City Chamberlain's office, trustee for these minors, had placed their funds in sour mortgage certificates. The City Chamberlain's office favored the securities of the State Title and Mortgage Company above all others for the years between 1928 and 1932. It bought $1,235,000 of State Title "guaranteed" mortgages, of which $1,169,845 dropped into default, and $890,000 of State Title guaranteed certificates, all of which went into default. For part of that period the City Chamberlain was none other than Edward J. Flynn. Mr. Flynn's law firm, Goldwater and Flynn, was of counsel for the State Title and Mortgage Company, and Monroe Goldwater was a director of National American Company, Inc., which controlled State Title.

State Title's other point of contact with Democratic politics lies in the person of Joseph V. McKee, a Flynn associate of long standing. Mr. McKee, former Acting Mayor and former President of the Board of Aldermen of New York City, received a $25,000 fee from the company for negotiating loans totaling $4,700,000 from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. In 1932 he persuaded the Bank of Manhattan Trust Company to "tone down" certain damaging parts of a letter, which, as depositary for the issue of group series "C" of State Title certificates, it was about to send to certificate holders to inform them of the Victoria Hotel annex "swap" transaction.

With Mr. Hardy's qualifications for the post of United States Attorney thus illumined, where does Max D. Steuer, new counsel for the Sabath committee, fit into the picture? Mr. Steuer is a major Tammany strategist. More than a Tammany lawyer, he is a Tammany master-mind. Tammany, through transit, land condemnations, tax assessments, pier manipulations, has constantly been linked with the highest flights of New York high finance. Can it be that Mr. Steuer, aware of Mr. Hardy's elevation, aware of the ring of patronage being forged around the present leadership of

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Tammany, sought a post which might enable him to remain a key factor? Tammany influence may be weak in the White House, but it is strong in Congress, where it controls even the powerful Rules Committee of the House. Mr. Sabath's committee has recently had its powers broadened. It can now probe into a variety of real-estate matters, including, perhaps, a certain title and mortgage company, one of whose former directors is to be United States Attorney. Is it possible that Mr. Steuer has formulated a plan? Will there be a fight in the Senate against Mr. Hardy's confirmation, as there certainly should be, and will Tammany, if hard pressed, join virtuously in that fight?

The Latest Invasion of Mexico

By ELIZABETH KNOWLTON

THE Lions invaded Mexico last summer. So did the Rotarians. Not to mention innumerable American teachers, American students, and ordinary American tourists. And now the incursion of winter tourists is about to begin.

"Here is much loot," wrote the lieutenant of Cortez about Mexico in 1519. The spirit of the invaders seems hardly to have changed in 400 years. Back across the border they pour laden with their spoils: hung with serapes and sombreros, struggling with paper packages, bowed down under baskets, those gay-colored baskets with Aztec patterns in red and blue and green, now packed to overflowing with Mexican silver, pottery, glassware, lacquer work, leather work, toys, and novelties—products of a people expert in handicrafts, acquired at a very favorable dollar exchange. Bundles and baskets fill sleeping cars and steamer staterooms as the Americans return in triumph from the latest, and not the least serious, invasion of Mexico.

This year marks the beginning of the foreign tourist trade as a really important factor in Mexican life. In the latter part of June the Rotarians held their international convention in Mexico, D. F., with 8,000 attending. Hardly had the capital recovered from this invasion when it was overrun in late July by a horde of between 3,500 and 4,000 Lions. Here was a demonstration of what the tourist trade means. For a week every street and restaurant in the city swarmed with Lions—stout Lions of California in bright yellow sweaters with purple badges, tall Lions of Kansas wearing enormous yellow sunflowers, round-faced, clean-shaven Lions of everywhere strutting about the metropolis in shirt sleeves and new giddy-colored sombreros, and with them their Lioness mates, smart in make-up and plucked eyebrows. They flooded the shops and the markets, bargaining avidly in high-pitched voices. Their presence dominated the town. The National Fine Arts Palace, the Rockefeller Center of Mexico, new, expensive, and modernistic with steel and dark marbles and glass, was given over to them as a convention building. Great blue and yellow signs and arrows—"information desk," "check room," "Providence for 1936"—broke out on the polished elegance of its walls; and the visitor to Mexico who wished to see this noted structure, with its glass stage curtain made by Tiffany, its Museum of Mexican Folk Art, its famous Rivera and Orozco frescoes, would be stopped in the doorway by a be-badged sergeant-at-arms: "Sorry. You must come back next week. This palace belongs to the Lions now."

Thus welcomed, the Lions made themselves thoroughly at home. Two met in a hotel lobby to go out to a restaurant to dine. One was dressed in ordinary clothes; the costume of the other consisted of an open-necked shirt with rolled-up sleeves, and seersucker trousers, both of which had obviously seen the dust and mud of many days of motor travel. "You aren't going to dinner in those clothes?" exclaimed the first. "Of course," said the other. "We're in Mexico!"

But there is a more serious aspect to this last invasion than a question of occasional international bad manners, unfortunate though those may seem, or even of the unaesthetic effect of booming good-fellowship in a soft-voiced ancient city. Again and again Mexico has attracted outside despoilers, and the harm done by the occasional military adventurers since the days of Cortez has been nothing to that caused by the economic dominations. During the colonial period the agricultural produce of the country enriched absentee landlords overseas; more recently, in the days of Díaz, to foreign large landholders as exploiters were added foreign financial interests, whose concessions now include the major portion of the nation's minerals, oil, and public utilities. However much we may absolve "predatory wealth," which merely followed economic laws, however little we may blame foreign capitalists, who entered only because native capitalists would not venture, the fact remains that with the greater part of its natural wealth pouring out of the country Mexico has become cruelly impoverished. Only the smallest proportion of the population ever struggles above the margin of bare subsistence. Those Indian peons who still own land barely keep alive; those who were deprived of their lands during the Díaz regime quietly starve.

But there *was* a revolution in Mexico. And today its leaders pay at least lip service to the doctrines of socialism and communism, and profess to be bending all the forces of the government, if necessary even to the point of confiscation of wealth and land, to throwing off the yoke of foreign capitalistic domination and improving the condition of the downtrodden peon. How far their actions bear out their words and how near the country is to a true communist state, is a subject of interminable discussion. Yet certainly something is being accomplished toward the break-up of the large landholdings and toward the education of the Indian, especially in practical agriculture and knowledge of sanitation.

In trying to improve the condition of its citizens, the Mexican government is faced with a situation almost unique today. The country is very little developed industrially, and the great majority of the people are accustomed to communal life in small villages with subsistence farming and handicrafts. Soviet Russia, forced to meet a somewhat similar problem, elected large-scale production and industrialization. Mexico, lacking the raw materials for industrialization, is trying the experiment of building a different type of civilization, along lines that seem fitted both to the natural resources and to the temperament and gifts of the people. Here in the

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twentieth century the present government is trying to preserve and perfect the early economic form of subsistence farming and handicrafts, with emphasis on production for exchange and immediate consumption within small groups rather than for export or even nation-wide commerce.

For long centuries, as invaders have come and gone, the Indian has been happy in his general way of living—with his communal village government, his work on the land which he loves, his frequent fiestas, and his crafts, for which he has the natural talents and the feeling of the artist. He does not crave any great increase in economic goods, and definitely shrinks from industrialization or any change in the tempo of his life. Foreign employers complain that he lacks ambition, because, when given high wages, his reaction is to work only part of the time rather than to change his standards. To transform Mexico, in its present stage of development, into a country of really contented people, all that would seem to be needed is an increase in productivity to the point where everyone would have plenty to eat, and an improvement in health knowledge and sanitation sufficient to lower the scandalously high death and disease rate.

Into this picture of a land of small resources and simple ways of living, trying to free itself from the influence of foreign capitalism and to work out its salvation in its own way, steps the figure of the American tourist. What is more, he is invited, even urged to come by the government itself, which needs badly the cash that he brings. And he will not require much urging: Mexico is a ready-made tourists' paradise. Give it a few modern hotels with a bath for every room, such as are already springing up not only in the capital but in many of the smaller towns and villages, and you will have a rival to California or the Riviera, with even better climate, greater variety and beauty of scenery—snow-capped volcanoes, wild forests, subtropical vegetation, and a wealth of flowers—and a much more picturesque people to decorate the background. And, not least important from the tourist point of view, there is an incredible and fascinating amount of loot to be carried away. The stream is already beginning to flow southward. With the completion of the new motor road from Mexico City to the American border, it will undoubtedly rise to tremendous proportions.

Is, then, Mexico's experiment going to end almost before it begins, swept away in the flood of the American tourist trade? Will Mexico become a purely parasitic nation, living on the yearly influx and gradually learning to reflect the less attractive traits of our commercial civilization? Will its government, dependent on us for most of its revenue, come to accept our point of view along with our money, and resign all its present efforts, however inadequate, toward the more equal distribution of wealth and the preservation of a pre-capitalistic economy? Will its people become restless and grasping and eager, losing their craftsman's pleasure in work well done and in the perfecting of each trifle, and striving instead to make each object faster than the last and to sell each one dearer, turning from their communal life of mutual helpfulness, as each tries in modern competitive fashion to get ahead of his next-door neighbor?

Through all its earlier foreign invasions Mexico preserved intact its native spirit and ways of living. Is it about to succumb at last?

The Future of British Labor

By HAROLD J. LASKI

London, December 1

ON November 14 the Labor Party gained 98 seats at the polls, and the Baldwin government was returned to power with a majority reduced, indeed, but still of 246 members. Even though each member on the government side of the House will represent only 27,000 voters as against 55,000 voters for each opposition member, this is unquestionably, from the progressive angle, a disappointing result. It means that for the next five years Mr. Baldwin, short of some unlooked-for catastrophe, will dominate the British scene.

What is the explanation of the result? Certainly, I think, no single cause but a number of contributory causes, the weight of each of which will vary according to one's individual standpoint. Among them must be included:

1. The absence of definite leadership in the Labor Party. Mr. Lansbury's resignation just before the election did grave harm. Mr. Attlee, his successor, did his best; but as he was widely believed to be a merely temporary appointment, he did not appear an alternative Prime Minister. To have such a leader is imperative in an election here. For the absence of such a one the Labor Party paid a heavy price. In my own judgment hundreds of thousands of non-party voters supported Mr. Baldwin simply because they did not know what was involved in voting for the other side.

2. An absence of clarity in the Labor Party attitude to foreign policy and rearmament. The official Labor view on the first was hardly distinguishable from that of the government, save as it attacked the record of Sir John Simon. On the second, if Mr. Baldwin asked for a blank check, the Labor Party's promise of "adequate" armament was, in the absence of a specific program, at least equally vague.

3. The record of the 1929 government. This was a heavy millstone round Labor candidates' necks. We could not be defended by a party which stood for socialism.

4. Fear. The electors, generally, felt that in a crisis such as this they had better trust the men they knew. Further (a) the unemployed voted Conservative in the hope partly that rearmament would mean work—for example, in the shipbuilding areas; and (b) the tariff-protected areas like Birmingham and Leicester voted to keep the protection against foreign trade.

5. Some weight must be given to distrust of the unions. Some of this lingers on from the general strike of 1926 and the election of 1931. It was exacerbated by the claim of the unions, ruthlessly made at the Brighton conference of the Labor Party last October, to dominate the shaping of party policy.

6. Certain minor causes are important. (a) There was poor local organization in many areas—for example, in

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Birmingham. (b) There were poor candidates badly chosen in others. I was myself sent to speak in behalf of at least four candidates for whom I should not myself have wished to vote. (c) The suddenness and brevity of the election hardly gave time for the making of Labor's case. (d) In the use of the wireless and the movie—both of great influence—the government was definitely more skilful than Labor.

Some aspects of the results deserve special emphasis.

1. Labor will have a strong front bench; almost all its tried leaders have been returned. But broadly speaking, its back benches will be unsatisfactory. There are too few young men. There are too many trade-union officials in the late fifties and sixties who have no special parliamentary contribution to make however well they may have served their unions. The Labor Party simply must find a way of bringing its young men early into the House if it wants to have a strong government next time.

2. The Liberal Party is finished. It could only run 150 candidates for 615 seats; it returned only 20 members. It lost its leader, Sir Herbert Samuel, and three of its whips. Forty-four of its candidates lost their deposits for failing to poll one-eighth of the votes cast in their respective constituencies. It has little hold on the electoral mind outside the west country.

3. National Labor is a farce. It will have eight members in the new House compared to fourteen in the last, and all of these were elected by Tory votes. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald was well beaten; Mr. Ramsay MacDonald by no less than 20,000 votes. Probably they will both continue in the government, but safe Tory seats will, if that be so, have to be found for them.

4. The Simonite Liberals obtained twenty-one seats; but they have become indistinguishable from the Conservatives. No doubt in the next few years they will be completely absorbed by the Conservative Party.

5. For the first time since 1924 a Communist candidate was returned for the mining constituency of East Fife.

6. The Fascists did not dare to run candidates at this election. It is, I think, safe to suggest that they are unlikely to develop any strength unless and until the Labor Party actually comes to power. The breakdown of conservatism might then give them a new significance.

7. The real victors of this election were Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Eden. The first typified security and common sense devoid of reaction; the second, a League of Nations policy in foreign affairs. They are the assets through whom the government obtains the support of the "mugwump" voters.

8. Predominantly, the Liberal vote of 1929 appears to have gone to the government candidates. This is especially the case in the urban constituencies. Assuming that the Liberal voter is usually the older voter, the increase in the Labor vote is, I think, mostly that of younger electors who have become twenty-one since 1931. In so far as this is so, it is, clearly, a hopeful sign for Labor.

If I had to put the result succinctly, I should say that while the electorate had a strong feeling against the government, it was not convinced that the Labor Party could safely be intrusted with power. It felt this, I think, on three main grounds: (a) a doubt whether the time was ripe for experiment with untested principles; (b) a doubt whether the Labor Party had the nerve or the courage or the determination (especially after 1929-31) to give effect to its principles; and (c) a conviction that, generally, the government had not done so badly and that, especially in an international crisis, there was no special reason to suppose that the Labor Party would do much better.

What of the future? I do not think anything is gained by concealing the fact that the result is a serious setback for Labor. It has now been out of office for four years; if things remain pretty normal, especially abroad, it will be out of office for four more years. It must win the next election if it wants to remain the vital alternative to conservatism, for the simple reason that a political party under the parliamentary system dare not go on losing if it is to retain its hold on the electoral mind. What, then, has Labor got to do in the next four years?

1. It has got to find a leader, stick to him, and give him the chance given to Mr. MacDonald to make himself a national figure whom the country expects to be Prime Minister. This cannot be done too soon. Of the possible men of this type I believe that only Mr. Attlee or Mr. Herbert Morrison are genuinely available. Granted the conditions of the problem, I believe Mr. Morrison more valuable in this role because he has the more arresting personality.

2. It has got to bring its young and able men into Parliament. That place, after all, is the one place where national political reputations are made. I know young men in the Labor Party who ought to be in the next Cabinet, but they are not in the House.

3. It has got to make up its mind whether it is going to be a "social-reform" party or a "socialist" party. If the first, it will, logically enough, continue to be essentially trade-union in complexion; but in this event it will only win in a period of relative prosperity when the economic situation permits the luxury of social reform within the framework of the present system. Frankly, I do not see signs of any such period ahead, and I think that a Labor government of this kind would bring us to another 1931. Alternatively, if it is to be a "socialist" party, it must accept the logic of that position. It must then find a philosophy and fit its scheme of legislative priorities to that philosophy. It must avoid the appearance of wanting to "slip into" socialism and the pretense that a frontal attack can be made on capitalism without paying the price for it. The only philosophy that suits this alternative is Marxism; and the Labor Party, if it wishes to be Marxist, must cease playing with the disillusioned Liberals who feel that there is a career in the Labor Party now that liberalism offers no constructive opportunities. Which choice the party will make I do not know with any confidence. Foreign affairs and the industrial position will do much to shape its decision. The one thing of which I am certain is that the party can no longer afford to be obscure about its outlook. The facts make a choice essential. Its fate depends upon the courage with which it makes the choice.

4. The Labor Party has also to make up its mind about the meaning of fascist Europe on the one hand and of Soviet Russia on the other. To the first, its attitude is still the *simpliste,* "It can't happen here." To the second, it still insists that British conditions are too different for Soviet experience to be significant. Both are the policies of the ostrich, and both are born of the refusal to understand that we are a world power enmeshed in a world system, and not

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an island power capable of isolation whenever we desire it. To confront these problems seriously means a drastic revision of Labor's foreign policy in the concrete. Events may force this in the next twelve months. But it is the mark of a great party to anticipate the lesson of events.

Corporate Tammany Halls

WALTER S. TOWER, executive secretary of the American Iron and Steel Institute, made his debut as a leading American humorist with a letter to Major George L. Berry, coordinator for industrial cooperation. Mr. Tower, in behalf of the steel industry, declined Major Berry's invitation to a conference at Washington for the creation of a new NRA. The steel industry, he said, looks to "the influences of natural economic forces" for recovery and fears the effect of any action "designed to regiment business enterprise."

Natural economic forces have not operated in the steel industry for a generation. Its prices are regimented. Its workers are regimented. Its investors are regimented. When it comes to coordination—*Gleichschaltung* is the Nazi term—Major Berry is an amateur beside the steel trust. Prices have goosestepped since 1901, and the prices of some steel products are higher now than they were in 1929. Steel-company towns are Third Reichs in miniature. And although United States Steel is, as they say, owned by the public, try and get even a Hitler-style plebiscite.

* * * * *

THE claim to a profit on services rendered at a price established in a free market has become a claim to operate corporate Tammany Halls without interference. The fight against the Utility Holding Company Act illustrates the dominant trend. Since United Gas Improvement has led the parade in the refusal to register with the SEC, examination of its structure is pertinent. U. G. I. declares that it does no interstate business, although within its huge system electric power is transmitted over eight state lines and gas over five. It asserts that all its companies are already regulated by state commissions, although one state commission after another has complained that effective regulation is hamstrung by the interlocking of operating with holding companies beyond state control.

The need for supervision is demonstrated by testimony on the U. G. I. given before the Federal Trade Commission. U. G. I. collected $2,000,000 in management fees in 1928 and $1,500,000 in 1929. It had more than $17,500,000 outstanding in cash advances to affiliated and subsidiary companies in 1929. At one time it had as high as $500,000 outstanding in loans to its officers, in at least one case to purchase directors' qualifying shares. All these loans may have been legitimate and proper and to the interest of its investors. But how are the investors to be sure? In February, 1931, U. G. I. had 77,961 stockholders. The largest was United Corporation, with 25.71 per cent of the shares. United Corporation, with $50,000,000 in stock, controlled $800,000,000 in assets. But United Corporation itself was a device to make it possible for the Morgan utility group to capitalize on the stock-market boom and to finance their control with the savings of the public. The temptation to insiders is great where they have so little stake in the company they control.

* * * * *

OPERATING, subholding, and construction companies are in the U. G. I. system. The same group sits on both sides of the table in fixing management fees, construction costs, and financing charges. Regulation at the present time places a premium on inefficient operation, costly management, and a bloated capital structure. The higher the costs and the higher the capital account shown, the more the consumer can be charged. The Federal Trade Commission report discloses the average annual rate of return to U. G. I. on the cost of its investment in various subsidiaries. Here are a few samples:

	Per cent
Allentown-Bethlehem Gas	21.36
American Gas	10.987
Concord Gas	49.3
Gas Securities Corporation	27.68
Harrisburg Gas	83.86
Philadelphia Electric	11.36

All these operating companies are regulated by state commissions. Is from 10 to 83 per cent a fair return? Investment in our most stable industry yields in many cases higher dividends than investments in highly speculative enterprises. The Federal Trade Commission report also shows the profits made by U. G. I. on utility investments which it sold. A few examples follow:

	Bought for		*Sold for*
Omaha Gas	$724,263.77	....	$1,770,727.40
Savannah Gas	24,987.37	....	2,771,034.00
Des Moines Gas	255,511.06	....	3,264,200.00
Minneapolis Gas Light	209,395.84	....	5,835,087.50
New York and Westchester Lighting	948,998.38	....	6,050,183.90

These profits, of course, reappear as capital on the books of the new owners. Consumers pay a return on them, and investors buy the stock issued against these inflated values. Such investments are hazardous in that they depend on continued control and/or continued evasion by utility companies of the regulatory agencies which fix the prices consumers must pay.

ISIDOR FEINSTEIN

Correspondence

What Follows Sanctions?

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In your issue of November 6 you say, "Mr. Simonds, in seeing this clash [of imperialistic interests, Britain versus Italy], which is there, fails to see the incomparably greater fact that human society is trying to organize itself on the principle of a Kellogg pact enforced by penalties, and thus bring to a head the experience of a cursed generation in waging the greatest and most disastrous war in history."

May I venture to say that what I do see is two things? In the first place, while, as you argue, sanctions may not mean a declaration of war, the effect of the form of sanctions to be employed against Italy must be identical with that of the "hunger blockade" employed against Germany after the Armistice. Therefore, the result must be the same, and what that result was is notorious.

In the second place, the effect of the advocacy of military sanctions by British Labor has been to make it impossible for the Labor Party to offer the slightest opposition to the present Tory program of armament expansion, because to impose military sanctions is to risk military reprisal, and against that nations resorting to sanctions must be prepared.

When human society, in its effort to organize itself on the principle of the Kellogg pact, has, at the very outset, to resort to the technique of the "hunger blockade," which was the most devastating detail of the "most disastrous war in history,"

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and to leave a clear field for nationalism to rush forward to vast armament expansion, it is my humble judgment that it is on the wrong track.

My quarrel with *The Nation* does not arise from any blindness as to the objective of sanctions but from a perception of what the consequences of the sanctions method of attaining that objective must be. So far the adoption of that method has led to the formation of a program to starve the Italian people into submission and to the renunication of all hope of disarmament.

Snowville, N. H., November 12 FRANK H. SIMONDS

College Football

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In your issue of November 27 "Left Wing" says some brisk things about college football. Most of them probably are true. However, as in all such articles dealing with general conditions, notable exceptions might well be cited. On November 16 Dr. Alan Chester Valentine was inducted as fourth president of the University of Rochester. In his address, speaking of publicity ballyhoo, he said:

> Much of this sophomoric distortion is centered about intercollegiate athletics and particularly about football. There is much that is good about athletic competition, but when victory becomes a necessity to maintain the morale of students and alumni, when the clamor of sports journalists and locker-room critics affects its policies, a university has sold its birthright. This university shall not yield to such distortion. Its students will continue to play games because they like them, but we shall not pretend that athletic achievement is the main or even a major end of college life. I turn with pleasure to more profitable things.

President Valentine is thirty-four years old and a dozen years ago was a first-class football player at Swarthmore. The University of Rochester lost seven out of eight games played this year, and no one connected with it or any of the alumni, so far as I have noted, raised a blood pressure about the record. There are schools which play what they preach.

Rochester, N. Y., November 25 PAUL BENTON

Mr. Canby and Miss Millay

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

May "an old gentleman wandering down a strange street" in whom "literature stirs . . . a number of vague, often undocumented associative thought processes" humbly state that in spite of approaching senility his memory is still reasonably clear. Your young lady critics of the critics charge him with rejecting many of Miss Millay's poems when he was on the *Yale Review*. The story runs the other way. One of the few things which in old age he still remembers with pride is that he saw some of the earliest poems that Miss Millay sent out and fought vigorously for their acceptance, but was defeated by the more conservative tastes of another editor no longer associated with the *Yale Review*. As he probably launched the story himself, it is rather too bad that it has turned such a somersault in getting into print. Differences in opinion seldom trouble him, nor even rather flagrant misstatements as to what he has said in his reviews, but as a steady admirer of Miss Millay's work for many years, he deprecates such gross inaccuracy.

New York, November 20 HENRY S. CANBY

From a Left Critic

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

We poor Marxist critics of the *New Masses* whose inferiority complexes and bourgeois subconscious the Misses Marshall and McCarthy analyze with so much relish would like to point out to the ladies that most of the confusions they giggle over are strictly theirs, and please not to try to put them on us. The confusions breed in two misconceptions; first, that this life of ours doesn't change and writers don't change, and therefore Marxist critics musn't change; and second, that Marxist critics all think alike. (Why the hell don't they wear their uniforms? our two critics seem plaintively to lament.) Life, however, does change, and changes pretty fast as even *The Nation's* columns indicate; and writers change more than the rest. That is why Sinclair Lewis and MacLeish and others get hit for one sort of book and are praised for another.

Secondly, the Marxist viewpoint is not rigid and fixed. It has not yet matured as a critical method in literature. But while it seems to us to have got farther on the way to usefulness and truth than other methods, it is not afflicted with so revelationary and conformist a psychology as the propaganda-ain't-art school.

Furthermore, the courting of middle-ground writers is not done, as our critics intimate, as a piece of social climbing; and it is eager, not because we want to make high-toned friends, but to unite writers against fascism. We feel that in the fight against fascism maybe there is no time to worry whether we have an over-eager look on our faces when we welcome allies.

New York, November 27 ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

The N. A. A. C. P. and the *Amsterdam News*

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

May I be permitted to make clear to the readers of *The Nation* that the position taken by William Pickens, referred to in Allan Chase's article, The *Amsterdam News* Is Winning, in *The Nation* of November 13, is Mr. Pickens's personal one? The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has taken no official position in this controversy. The individual officers who have expressed their opinions on different occasions are acting on their individual responsibility. This, of course, applies to my statement in behalf of the workers.

New York, November 20 WALTER WHITE, Secretary

Patriotism and the Legion

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In *The Nation* for November 20 you commented on an Armistice Day speech delivered by Michael J. Kane before a group of American Legion men in Philadelphia. As a delegate to the Philadelphia County Council of the American Legion, I answered the intemperate and un-American remarks of Mr. Kane. My speech, published in the Philadelphia *Record* on November 10, from which I quote below, is, I believe, more representative of Legion opinion than Mr. Kane's.

> I feel I would be false to our institutions and to the Legion if I did not take this occasion to condemn and repudiate the unlawful and un-American sentiments of Mr. Kane. . . .

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As an American citizen who fervently believes in our form of government, I conceive it my duty to be zealous for the freedom and the liberty of every other citizen. In order that I may enjoy freedom, I must permit everyone the freedom to differ from me. I believe in intelligent patriotism. . . . We must guard against jingoism and desist from a disposition typified by Mr. Kane to whip or shoot anyone who doesn't goosestep with him or his kind.

Philadelphia, November 16 JACOB HULITT

Political Prisoners

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Political prisoners in the United States today are the objects of special persecution in most federal, state, and local prisons. They are denied even the meager privileges generally accorded by prison rules. Every attempt is made not only to cut them off completely from the world outside and the labor movement in whose ranks they fought and fell, but also to break their spirit and morale. Mental torture is the general rule, and in many cases it is accompanied by physical torture.

There are today almost one hundred men and women, political prisoners, serving terms of from one year to life imprisonment in four federal penitentiaries and thirty-seven state and local prisons for their activity in the labor movement or as a result of vicious racial persecution. In some jails their cells are periodically raided, their little personal belongings, books, and letters confiscated. Their visitors have been barred from many jails. In one New York state institution their entrance was prohibited by armed troopers. Threats, solitary confinement, withholding of incoming and outgoing mail, barring of a Weekly News Letter compiled from the pages of the nation's daily newspapers—these are some of the mental tortures imposed on men and women who sacrificed their freedom for their beliefs.

The underlying cause for this special persecution is the degrading fact that the United States does not recognize the status of political prisoners. They are officially numbered and listed as murderers, dynamiters, rapists, thieves—crimes pinned on them as the result of brutal frame-ups. Thus Tom Mooney becomes No. 31921—murderer. Courageous miners who defended their homes and families against gun thugs, bullets, and starvation are recognized only as dynamiters or killers.

The Prisoners' Relief Department of the International Labor Defense, which sends monthly relief checks to these long-term political prisoners and their families, corresponds with them, and, most important of all, maintains a hawk-like vigilance over every attempt to deprive them of their most elementary rights behind the bars, is launching a campaign for the recognition of the status of political prisoners and for special privileges for them as such as an integral part of its annual Christmas drive for relief to political prisoners and their families.

New York, November 2 ROSE BARON,
Secretary, Prisoners' Relief Department

Christmas Toys

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Again Pioneer Youth appeals to your readers to dig into their closets for toys, books, dolls, games, and serviceable clothing for the miners' children in West Virginia.

We no longer give away presents indiscriminately at mass Christmas parties. Our club children now repair the toys. A few days before Christmas they run a toy sale for the townspeople. Nothing costs over twenty-five cents. Many things are cheaper. Miners and their wives can pick out presents their children want.

Please send things quickly to the Christmas Party Committee, Pioneer Youth, East Bank, Kanawha County, West Virginia.

New York, December 3 AGNES SAILER,
Director, Mining Town Work

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Contributors to This Issue

SAMUEL GRAFTON is a New York newspaperman.

ELIZABETH KNOWLTON contributes articles to the *Atlantic Monthly* and other magazines.

HAROLD J. LASKI, professor of political science at the University of London, is the author of "Democracy in Crisis."

ISIDOR FEINSTEIN is an associate editor of the New York *Post*.

HANS CHRISTIAN is a Milwaukee newspaperman.

RUTH BRINDZE is the author of "How to Spend Money."

LUDWIG LORE, formerly the editor of the New York *Volkszeitung*, now conducts a column, "Behind the Cables," in the *Post*.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER is the editor of "An Anthology of Light Verse."

PAUL W. WARD is a Washington correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun*.

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Labor and Industry

Craft and the Crafts

By HEYWOOD BROUN

WILLIAM GREEN announced proudly at a newspaper conference that peace had come to the building-trades unions and that jurisdictional conflicts would occur no more. Moreover, he announced that here was the full and perfect answer of the craft organizations to the campaign of the industrial unionists. But when Mr. Green brought the play out in detail it hardly seemed a solid enough foundation to bear the whole weight of the labor movement. After all, it entailed the use of much machinery outside the family. The original designation of carpenters, let us say, or sheet-metal workers to do the doors in a piece of construction is to be left to the contractor in case of a dispute. Apparently the motto is to be, "The job must go on."

The craft union which feels itself slighted in the arrangement may appeal to the arbitration of a federal judge, and his decision shall be final. The trouble with this set-up as a working arrangement is that federal judges never make findings very quickly. If the judge comes in at the end of three or four months to say that the contractor was wrong and that the job should have been done by the sheet-metal workers instead of the carpenters, his decision may be of little but academic interest. The job may be already completed. The carpenters will have the pay, and the sheet-metal workers will have nothing but a grudge and a moral victory.

As a matter of fact, arrangements far more shrewdly devised for peace in the building trades have been attempted before, and within the last few years two or three have fallen by the wayside. There is little reason to believe that the present plan will long survive. At any rate it is an all too insufficient answer to the growing demand for organization along industrial lines.

I do not think that anybody seriously doubts the vast increase in membership which would come to the A. F. of L. if John L. Lewis and his allies succeeded in their fight for the industrial set-up. Unfortunately, there are craft leaders who are far from desiring an increase in membership. It is to their immediate interests to keep the A. F. of L. small. Their power and their very jobs as union office-holders may be swept away by the advent of new mass groups within the organization.

But I think that some of the craft leaders are making a mistake even from the point of view of self-interest. The American federation is not in a position to make the choice between expanding or standing still. The federation must expand or die. To stand still is to provide an easy target for the murderous fire which manufacturers are about to pour into the ranks of the unionists. Many of the leaders are loath to accept the fact that the trade-union movement must battle for its life in the next few years, but every indication points in this direction. Big business must at least receive credit for being brutally frank. When Mr. Utley told the manufacturers' convention that the employees would vote 90 per cent along with their employers if the workers were "properly approached," nobody could have had much doubt about his meaning. The methods of Mark Hanna are to be introduced again, and in many of the large plants the word will be given out definitely that a failure to vote for Landon, Knox, Vandenberg, or whoever the Republican nominee may be, will mean the loss of the job. Company unions will be pressed far more than ever before in order to build up groups which will be politically as well as economically subservient to the will of the big-business bosses.

The same spy system which spots a man for union activities can be employed to see that he votes "right" or at least talks that way. Old-fashioned methods of trade-union organizing are not only slow but inefficient. The organizer who goes into open-shop country and tries to get the workers to assemble in a central hall to listen to speeches is butting his head against a stone wall. Many interested workers are afraid to turn up. They have every reason to be afraid. Spotters will pick them off and report them for no greater crime than listening to union arguments.

Nor can these recruits be effectively reached through literature. The labor press, including the weeklies and the magazines, is still weak. Trade unionists must face the fact that the Associated Press, which is the very spinal column of news dissemination, itself stands accused of working against organization in its discharge of Morris Watson, Newspaper Guild vice-president. The newspapers of America will give the A. F. of L. scant room for legitimate news stories. The whole fight between the craft groups and the industrialists has been scandalously underplayed. This is one of the most important political and economic issues in America and even so it gets very scant editorial or news mention. The newspapers in New York are angels of light in this respect compared to the provincial press.

What organized labor should do is take to the air. John L. Lewis on a regular hook-up once a week would command a huge audience from the beginning. As the voice of labor he could ride through and over the spies and the snoopers of the employers. He might even collect in confidence the letters of workers anxious to be organized. All this could be done without the needless making of martyrs in the ranks of those brave people who are the first to stick out their necks. Only when a sufficient number of recruits had been gathered would it be necessary to make an open move. Labor is fighting big business. It cannot fight it successfully with flying squadrons composed of horse-and-buggy unionists.

In the Labor Section Soon

Company Unions in the Mass-Production Industries

A Series of Articles by Various Contributors

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The Wisconsin "People's Front"

By HANS CHRISTIAN

Milwaukee, December 5

ON December 1 Wisconsin was presented with a new version of the famous "People's Front." It became known as the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation, and quite a tale hangs by its formation. Rank-and-file pressure, conceived and nurtured largely by Communists and other militants, forced the federation into being. But shrewd La Follette key men and Socialists led by Dan Hoan captured the movement in its tender stages, halter-broke it, and carefully guided it into safe, old-line political pastures. In no sense can the result be called a true farmer-labor political uprising, but it may well develop into exactly that.

As matters stand, a coalition for political action unusual in American politics has been formed between three political parties—the Progressives, the Socialists, and the Farmer-Progressive League—and six economic groups—the Wisconsin milk pool, the state federation of labor, the Farmers' Equity Union, the Farm Holiday Association, the railway brotherhoods and crafts, and the Wisconsin Workers' Alliance. The immediate effect should be a united voting front of all liberal and radical forces in Wisconsin. If the conference action is approved by the groups involved, Hoan appears assured of reelection in Milwaukee in the spring and Phil La Follette in the state in the fall.

The federation plan was voted at a meeting of 225 delegates, 25 from each of the nine organizations. Voting on key issues was split about two to one. The minority, or left-wing, delegates had hoped for a genuine farmer-labor party, which would go on the ballot under its own name. Instead of that, provisions were made that will enable the La Follette-Hoan leadership to keep a tight rein on the new federation for eighteen months; that is, the La Follette plan for cooperation with Roosevelt in the 1936 elections was not imperiled. Not until June, 1937, will the federation hold its first open state convention. For the next ninety days a provisional committee of eighteen will be in charge. After that a state executive board of nine members will take control until the convention.

A rain of resolutions that descended last summer upon the executive board and the state convention of the Wisconsin Federation of Labor, demanding a labor or farmer-labor party, was the beginning of the move that culminated in the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. It was a genuine rank-and-file demand, and it grew out of the widespread dissatisfaction of Wisconsin farmers and workers with the Roosevelt deal and to some extent with the La Follette regime. State labor leaders, members of the Socialist Party, so manipulated the convention that labor-party discussions were limited to two representatives from each of the preceding nine groups. This meant that the new party movement, as soon as it left the convention floor, was removed from all rank-and-file interference. The eighteen delegates became the leaders of their respective organizations. They met repeatedly behind closed doors, and all other members of their groups and of all other groups were strictly excluded. The conferences were led by Mayor Hoan, Thomas Duncan, confidential adviser of Governor La Follette, and Henry Ohl, Jr., veteran president of the state federation of labor.

The constitution, the platform, and the organization plan which they worked out in secret was finally passed by the December 1 conference. Fraternal delegates and official observers from farmer and labor groups throughout the state came to the conference, but all were refused admittance. All suggestions and resolutions not in accord with the plan agreed upon were ruled out of order, among them one submitted by Mrs. Victor Berger, a Socialist delegate, calling for an open ratification convention to be held in ninety days. Feeling for a true labor party ran high on the first day, and observers said that had the vote been taken late Saturday evening such a party would have been formed. The entire conference was ended suddenly at noon Sunday by the leaders. Much business remained to be done, and the session had been scheduled to run all day. However, the left-wingers were becoming better organized and in the last few hours were clearly gaining strength.

The platform favors cooperative or publicly owned farm marketing, milk distribution as a public utility, joint state and federal social-security laws, a publicly owned banking system, and higher taxes on incomes and inheritances. It contains the words, "Farmers, workers, and other progressive-minded people must form a militant political group toward obtaining a new order of production for use, lest we have another collapse, fascism, and war."

Some odd features attached to the new federation will require clarification. None of the nine participating groups, it was announced, will take part in the federation officially or as a group—with the exception of the Socialist Party. Their memberships are invited to form clubs which will then join the federation. The Socialist Party, however, will enter as a group—providing its members vote to do so in a referendum soon to be taken.

In the spring municipal election Milwaukee Socialists will have the privilege of choosing candidates in those wards where the party is strong. In other wards united-front federation candidates are presumably to be set up. This is a non-partisan election and no changes will therefore be required on the ballots. But in state elections to be held next fall the federation candidates will go on the ballots in the Progressive columns. This means that the Socialist Party name will disappear entirely from Wisconsin elections. The passage of that provision was the Progressives' most signal victory in the conference. In some sections of his party Mayor Hoan has already been accused of selling socialism down the river for the sake of votes. His own position is that the coalition will open up fertile fields for the dissemination of socialist education among the voters of Wisconsin. Whatever criticism may be made of the manner in which the new federation came into being, its formation caught the forces of reaction unawares and elicited half-hysterical cries for the formation of S. O. S. groups—"save out state" societies "to ward off the radical hordes that threaten to destroy our state."

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The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation is a step in the right direction. Its effectiveness in the sharpening struggle for a better order will increase in proportion as its leaders loosen their grip and admit the eager rank and file to democratic participation. Its choices are plainly indicated: to the left lies the road toward socialism, peace, and sanity; to the right, capitulation to opportunism, "modified capitalism," defeat at the hands of the haves, fascism, and war.

The Case for Industrial Unionism

By WILLIAM GREEN

AN industrial form of organization is the organization of all men employed in an industry into one compact union. Craft unionism means the organization of men employed in their respective crafts, resulting in numerous organizations within a particular industry.

The organization of men by industry rather than by crafts brings about a more perfect organization, closer cooperation, and tends to develop the highest form of organization. The causes of jurisdictional disputes are considerably decreased and in many industries can be eliminated altogether. The constant friction resulting among craft organizations in their contention for jurisdiction causes the labor movement more trouble and greater inconvenience than any other problem with which it has to deal. When men are organized by industry they can concentrate their economic power more advantageously than when organized into craft unions. The results of such concentration of economic strength are the promotion of their common welfare and the advancement of their common interests.

The United Mine Workers of America is an industrial organization. All men employed in and around the coal mines, regardless of their skill or calling, belong to the United Mine Workers of America. In negotiating a wage scale between the coal operators and coal miners, a schedule of wages is arranged governing all classes of labor, skilled and unskilled, employed in and around the coal mines. By this process the interest of the unskilled worker is given as much attention as that of the skilled worker. It is indeed, in the fullest sense, a policy of all for each and each for all. A settlement of the wage scale is not finally reached until the schedules applying to all classes of labor employed in and around the mines are agreed to.

The advantage of such a form of organization is so obvious that one can scarcely conceive of any opposition thereto. A form of organization that protects the interests of the unskilled worker is the form of organization most desirable. Much complaint has been directed against craft organizations because little regard has been given to the problems of the unskilled workers. It is becoming more and more evident that if unskilled workers are forced to work long hours and for low wages, the interests and welfare of the skilled worker are constantly menaced thereby.

In the development of industry and organization the tendency is toward concentration and perfection. This applies to the organization of labor as well as to the organization of industry and capital. Hence the reason why organized labor is gradually passing from craft organization to the more effective industrial forms of organization. It may be well-nigh impossible to eliminate the craft form of organization in certain lines of industry. However, it is quite possible to establish industrial forms of organization in the railroad industry, the printing industry, and in other industries where groups of organizations are formed into councils and federated bodies.

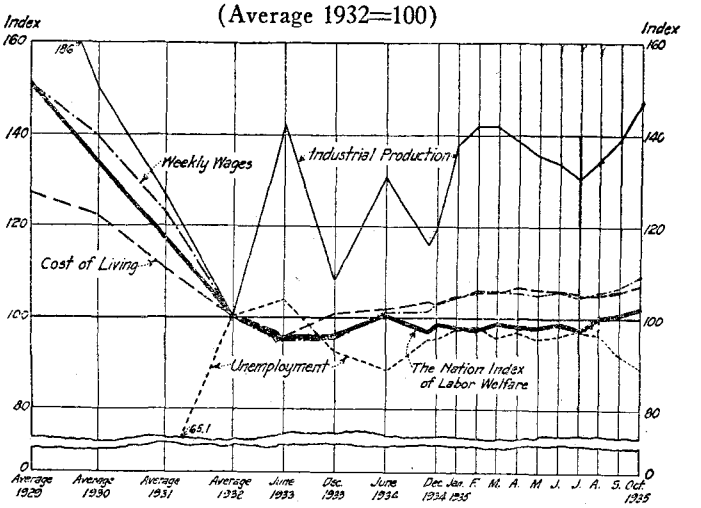
Summing up the situation, some of the advantages resulting from an industrial form of organization are the reduction of opportunities or causes for jurisdictional disputes, the concentration of economic strength, the blending into harmonious cooperation of all men employed in industry, and the advancement and protection of the interests of the unskilled laborer in the same proportion as that of the skilled worker.

[EDITORS' NOTE: *The foregoing convincing statement of the case for industrial unionism is reprinted from "The American Labor Yearbook" for 1917-18, when Mr. Green was an official of the United Mine Workers of America.*]

The Labor Index

CONTINUING the spectacular advance started in August, *The Nation* Index of Labor Welfare rose to 102.5 in October, the highest point since early in 1931. Each of the component parts of the index showed a substantial improvement over September, as well as over October, 1934. Compared with the previous month, employment rose 250,000 and pay rolls increased $8,200,000. The average weekly wage was $22.11 as against $21.97 in September; and the number on relief rolls—including WPA workers—showed a slight decline.

THE CHART OF LABOR WELFARE
(Average 1932=100)



That a large portion of the rise must be attributed to seasonal factors is indicated by the fact that the September-October improvement this year was much less than in the corresponding period of 1934. Last year, after an extremely bad September, the Labor Index rose from 97.3 to 99.7 in October. During the past twelve months weekly wages have increased 6 per cent, while the cost of living has advanced 4 per cent, leaving the employed worker with a net gain of two cents on every dollar which he earned a year ago. However, his real wages are still 13 per cent lower than in 1929

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and 7 per cent lower than in 1931. Unemployment and the number on relief also far exceed the 1931 level. Neither employment nor pay rolls have kept pace with the rise in industrial activity.

Preliminary figures for October, and revised figures for September, 1935, and October, 1934, are as follows:

	(1932=100)		
	Oct. 1935	*Sept. 1935*	*Oct. 1934*
Industrial Production . .	147*	139†	117
Average Weekly Wages .	108.4*	107.5†	102.3
Cost of Living	106*	105.5	102.3
Real Wages	102.3*	101.9	100
Unemployment	90*	91†	91
Index of Labor Welfare	102.5*	101.4†	99.7

* Preliminary. † Revised.

Facts for Consumers

TWO warnings issued by the Food and Drug Administration in the last few weeks have, for obvious reasons, received little if any mention in the daily press. The first reports that an unusually high proportion of decomposed and otherwise putrid salmon was packed this year by the Alaska canneries, and that since July a quarter-million shipping cases have been confiscated. Conditions in the Alaska canneries have long been bad, but W. G. Campbell, chief of the Food and Drug Administration, in his 1935 report proudly announced only one seizure of canned salmon, which still left the record clean because this had been packed a year before. The present backsliding is due, according to the administration, to the season's unusually good catch, which provided a supply greater than the canneries could handle. Production lagged so far behind that tons of salmon had partially rotted before they were processed. Canned salmon seized during September and October was shipped by the following companies: Alaska Packers' Association, Alaska Southern Packing Company, Annette Island Canning Company, Berg Packing Company, Columbia River Packers' Association, Deep Sea Salmon Company, First Bank of Cordova, Glacier Sea Foods Company, Independent Salmon Canners, Kelley Clarke Company, Klawock Packing Company, Lowe Trading Company, New England Fish Company, P. E. Harris and Company, Puget Fisheries, Superior Packing Company, Washington Fish and Oyster Company, Western Pacific Packing Company, Wrangell Packing Company.

* * * *

THE second administration release not thought news by the press outlines new regulations for orange growers who have found it economically advantageous to improve on nature by dyeing the skins of oranges. The more stringent requirements will not become effective until September, 1936, and before that date the growers many find some means to circumvent them. The administration's ruling officially recognizes the charge that the coloring process is being used on green and under-ripe fruit to conceal inferiority. The expensive dyeing equipment was installed, according to the citrus industry, merely to add eye appeal. All dyed oranges must now be clearly stamped with the words "color added," and so can easily be recognized by consumers.

The new ruling implies that the present standard of eight parts of sugar to one of acid is not high enough, and after its effective date the staining of oranges "in simulation of oranges of greater maturity and flavor or of superior variety" will be considered a violation. No standard is established, and whether the 1936 ruling will eliminate the dyeing of oranges remains to be seen.

BECAUSE of the delay in the printing of government documents, parts of the Food and Drug Administration's report for the year ending June, 1935, were antiquated before it left the press. The report on the salmon canneries is a case in point. Seizures of fruit and vegetables for excessive spray residue is another. Aside from apples, which for many years have headed the list, the products found to be most heavily loaded with poisons during the last few months were quinces, pears, cabbage, and cauliflower. In the annual report no seizures of quinces or cabbage were listed. The total number of seizures for excessive spray residue in 1934-35 were, however, high—338 compared with 58 for the previous year. The increase is attributed by the administration to the introduction of oil sprays by Michigan apple growers, which increase the difficulty of spray removal, to the greater activity of the Food and Drug Administration inspectors, and to the use of new and more accurate colorimetric methods for determining lead residue. A similar test for fluorine, in which the spray residue is dissolved in a chemical reagent and the color checked with a photometer, has also been developed by the administration's chemists. No accurate analytical method has yet been devised for determining excessive selenium content, a comparatively new poison used on citrus fruit and grapes. This spray soaks into the soil, is absorbed by the roots, and is thus fed directly to the fruit. Until an analytical method suitable for court work is developed, the consumer can expect no protection against it.

* * * *

FIVE national advertisers have recently been called to account by the Federal Trade Commission with the following results:

The Jergens-Woodbury Sales Corporation will discontinue advertising its facial cream as a new or unique protection from the danger of blemishes or as giving to an aging dry skin the appearance of "supple youth," and will no longer assert that "Element 576" in Woodbury's Cold Cream causes the oil glands beneath the skin's outer surface to function better.

The Musterole Company will stop advertising that Musterole penetrates to the seat of trouble and prevents chest and croupy colds from becoming serious, and that there is no muscular pain or sore throat too severe for Musterole.

Pine Brothers will stop advertising that its Glycerine Tablets will stop coughing instantly, and that Orasol, a mouth wash and breath purifier, is an antiseptic.

Pro-Ker, a treatment for baldness and other hair troubles, will no longer be represented as capable of making the scalp healthy or preventing hair from falling out.

Health Products Corporation, distributors of Feen-a-Mint, the Chewing Gum Laxative, will discontinue claims that Feen-a-Mint relieves constipation satisfactorily and is the most scientific way to get rid of constipation and headaches.

* * * *

WHEN a museum holds a "Consumer Exhibit"—that's news. But the Newark Museum, probably the first to arrange such an exhibit, has found it almost impossible to have it noticed in local newspapers. The purpose of the exhibit is to train the consumer to know what he is buying; this is done by a collection that includes jars which magnify their contents, slack-filled containers, and containers with false bottoms. A series of tests for textiles applied to samples of fabrics purchased locally is also on view. Still another feature is a model medicine chest, which of couse does not include well-advertised proprietories. The exhibit will be on view in the branches of the Newark Public Library until July, 1937.

RUTH BRINDZE

[*Miss Brindze's page appears every other week in* The Nation.]

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Books, Drama, Films

Our Critics, Right or Wrong. V

Literary Salesmen

By MARGARET MARSHALL and MARY McCARTHY

IN the past four articles of this series the *Herald Tribune Books,* the *Saturday Review of Literature,* the New York *Times Book Review,* and the literary section of the *New Masses* have been examined in respect to their usefulness as critical guides to literature during the past ten years. It would be pleasant to drop the matter here and to ignore the book columnist of the New York daily newspaper, since he is, after all, such an easy mark. Unfortunately, he is influential; his column is scanned (at least) by millions of readers a day. It is therefore vital that we take a brief look at him.

It must be acknowledged at the outset that it would be absurd to expect profound literary criticism from any writer whose job demands that he read and review one or more books in a single day. John Chamberlain may assert airily: "As a daily reviewer I am not momentously conscious of believing very differently than I did as a weekly reviewer or free-lance writer . . .": and it is quite probable that Mr. Chamberlain's general views of life and literature have undergone no striking change during his two years' tenancy of his column on the *Times.* His practice, however, *has* altered. It is extremely doubtful that Mr. Chamberlain, given a few days to think it over, would have said, for instance, that Robert Briffault's "Europa" "may lack one or two of the elements of great fiction but it . . . will probably stand up as the most useful novel that has come to light"; and the first sentence of his review of November 19 is the rather desperate remark of the typical newspaper reviewer: "One finishes Frederic Prokosch's 'The Asiatics' with a helpless tongue-tied feeling born of the fact that no critical clichés seem to fit this astonishing novel."

Lewis Gannett, who is disarmingly frank, put his finger on the difficulties of the trade he and Mr. Chamberlain now follow in his comment on Sholom Asch's "Three Cities": "It may be remembered when 'Anthony Adverse' is forgotten; but I never got well started. There were good books and shorter out that day." Each of the newspaper critics, with the exception of Mr. Chamberlain, has, on some occasion, inveighed against the exigencies of time and mass circulation which hamper him in the exercise of his craft. A certain amount of this fretfulness is justified; but the book columnists overdo it when they offer the daily pressure to which they are subjected as a kind of blanket alibi for errors in judgment. Harry Hansen, for instance, simply does not make sense when he presents the following excuse for his erratic critical behavior:

> Now and then I hear that we are too enthusiastic . . . I don't share this view. The enthusiasm in newspaper reviewing comes, I believe, because we write after the first impact; if we had weeks and months to devote to a book we might cool off.

If this statement means anything at all, it means that Mr. Hansen fears that his first reactions to literature are usually wrong; and if Mr. Hansen really doubts the reliability of his first reactions he has no business running a daily book column. In a different way Lewis Gannett apologizes for his work in the *Herald Tribune:*

> My own column must reveal my lamentable ignorance of the eternal principles of criticism; a review of my own reviews would, I suspect, disclose little but an autobiography. Well, why not? Why pretend more? Anatole France called criticism the adventures of a soul among masterpieces; our daily columns are the adventures of our modern minds in the modern world as reflected in its books.

It is not necessary or even possible for the newspaper reviewer to write brilliant or subtle criticism. Still, it seems odd that a "lamentable ignorance of the eternal principles of criticism" should qualify a man for the position of book columnist, especially since he does not by any means restrict himself to reporting the evidence but is continually handing down critical decisions. Mr. Gannett sums up his own case adequately. He has had no special training in literature or criticism. He came to the *Herald Tribune* from *The Nation,* where he was a first-rate writer on foreign affairs. William Soskin of the *American* has an equally non-literary background. He was a law student at Columbia University, a reporter on Wisconsin and Chicago newspapers, managing and news editor of several New York newspapers, before he was appointed book columnist on the *Evening Post.* Harry Hansen was a war and peace-conference correspondent for the Chicago *Daily News* shortly before he became the literary editor of that paper and thence graduated to the New York *World.* Only John Chamberlain, who worked for some years on the literary section of the Sunday *Times,* and for a short period on the *Saturday Review of Literature,* seems to have served an apprenticeship in criticism. It is significant that Mr. Chamberlain today so far outshines his fellow book columnists that we tend to overestimate his talents.

If we wish to know why it is that a man so patently ill at ease in the critical chair as Mr. Gannett, say, or Mr. Soskin, is allowed to conduct a book column in an important New York newspaper, we need only to inquire into the book columnist's real function to discover the answer. The book columnist's job is not to evaluate literature, for at that he is woefully inefficient; his job is, to put it bluntly, to sell books. Since the *Herald Tribune,* for instance, does not print newspapers for art or typography's sake, Mr. Gannett's column must, at the very worst, pay for itself; and across the page from Mr. Gannett's column we find the publishers' advertising which supports it. Literature is art; but it is, at the same time, merchandise. Publishers cannot print only good books, even if they want to, for there are not in one season enough to go even once around. Publishers' lists, then, are substantially composed of mediocre books, heavily advertised as "good" or "great." Many or most of these books a news-

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paper columnist helps to sell. The average mediocre novel will draw from him a favorable review, warm enough in tone to send little trickles of cash customers into the city's bookstores. He writes favorable reviews, not because he is crooked, not because he is the conscious tool of the publishers whose advertising eventually pays his salary, but because he is a pleasant, generous man with no literary training, very little discrimination, and a vague "love of books." As one might expect, he professes contempt for "highbrows"; it is indeed his favorite rationalization when he is confronted with his own critical shortcomings. "The simple way of avoiding superlatives," says Mr. Brickell, neatly avoiding the issue, "and one that is often followed by the reviewers of the highbrow weeklies, is not to like anything, and particularly not to like anything that anybody else likes."

It is not to be imagined that Gannett, Brickell, Soskin, *et al.* are the only literary salesmen disguised as critics who function in the book world of today. The reviewers on the *Herald Tribune Books,* the *Saturday Review of Literature,* and the New York *Times Book Review* are performing precisely the same service for the publishing houses. Among the literary weeklies *Books* is most conscious of its role as a book-selling medium. There was a time, in the middle and late twenties, when *Books* was a moderately respectable literary journal. Its back pages were filled with reviews of trivial pieces of fiction and non-fiction, but its cover and front section were often devoted to articles by important men and women of letters. Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Paul Valéry, and Lytton Strachey were making in *Books* stimulating contributions to critical thought. Today any Sunday's *Books* looks like a trade journal. No distinguished critical name adorns its cover; an entire page in the back section is devoted to a tabulated account of the best-sellers as reported by bookstores all over the country; a downright unfavorable review, particularly of a work of fiction, is a rare and disturbing phenomenon, though some harassed reviewers have learned how to insert a hint of their real feelings between the favorable or equivocal lines.

The causes of this change in policy are readily perceived. *Books,* of course, subsists on advertising. Book publishers were among the first to feel the pinch of the depression. Lowered sales meant a lowered budget for newspaper advertising. What was more natural than that *Books,* recognizing the publishers' plight, should do what it could to get a larger slice of the reduced advertising budget. Before the realities of depression literary pretensions faded. The effort to make the date of its review coincide with the date of publication of the book reviewed was intensified until at present *Books* frequently appears, with its consistently favorable review, several days before the book is actually on sale. It began to feature lists solicited from well-known persons of "Books I Have Liked," "Good Reading," "Books I Have Read Recently," "Books I Expect to Like This Season," "Books I Wish I'd Read." Later it introduced a Popular Fiction Number and a Mystery Story Number. Its latest and most successful stroke in its campaign to endear itself to the publishers resulted in the publication of its tabulated list of best-sellers. This was the consummation of a deal with the booksellers. The *Herald Tribune* today distributes about thirty thousand copies of *Books,* at a nominal cost, to bookstores in all the key cities of America. The booksellers mail these on, free of charge, to thirty thousand customers; and, in return, *Books* every Sunday prints its lists of the booksellers' weekly accomplishments in the sale and propagation of culture.

Useful as all these sales stunts must have been to the financial welfare of *Books,* by themselves they would have availed virtually nothing. To cement the friendly relations between criticism and advertising, *Books* needed and got favorable reviews of new books. This it has achieved in various ways. Reviewers who were obviously second-string in the old days (and for some reason the majority of these are tender-hearted ladies) were moved up to take the place of more stringent commentators. Again, *Books* may hand out a doubtful book to the author's best friend, as when it invited Malcolm Cowley to review the work of his familiar, Matthew Josephson, and intrusted the latest effort of Branch Cabell to Ellen Glasgow. It encourages a specialist in one field to review a bad book in another, where his ignorance will make him timid. Stuart Chase, for example, was called upon to consider "The Glories of Venus," a novel about Mexico by Susan Smith. Mr. Chase, naturally, could only report: "Whether it is a good novel I cannot say, for I am an economist . . . Susan Smith can write." Sometimes it finds hidden virtues in hitherto neglected authors. In 1930, for instance, a whole page in *Books* was devoted to proving that Harold Bell Wright's works—which the reviewer admitted had had scant notice from *Books* in the past—are folk literature. No wonder the publishers found it worth while to insert, two pages later, a half-page advertisement of Mr. Wright's latest opus. Reviewers on *Books* are hand-picked, but if *Books* makes a mistake, there are ways of rectifying it. Sometimes the review is pulled out at the last minute and another substituted, as was the case with Benjamin Stolberg's review of Ida Tarbell's "Owen D. Young," which was subsequently published in *The Nation,* while Gannett's review of the same book took its place in *Books.* Sometimes, *Books* reviewers complain, the offensive (that is, critical) lines are cut; and whatever unfavorable reviews appear are usually printed some time after the book's publication. To insure perfect results, the selling power of the reviewing staff of *Books* has recently, we hear, been gone over by an efficiency expert. The expert, we understand, frowns on "negative" reviewers and smiles on Sinclair Lewis, who leads the list, though Lewis's most enthusiastic admirer, H. L. Mencken, once pronounced him "a dreadful ham as a critic."

The *Herald Tribune* is occasionally hypocritical about its activities, now and then candid. The editor of *Books,* instructing one young reviewer in the practice of her art, assured her that "there is something good in every book that must be brought to the attention of every reader." On the candid side are the quotations from booksellers which the *Herald Tribune* occasionally prints to the effect that Lewis Gannett is their favorite (best book-selling) critic, and the advertisement in *Books* which announced: "Every day Lewis Gannett writes on books. . . . Every day, too, timely advertisements and news stories keep you abreast of developments in the realm of books."

The *Herald Tribune's* book policy has had its effect on its competitors, the *Times Book Review* and the *Saturday Review of Literature.* Neither of these publications has gone to such extremes as *Books* has in its quest of advertising. The *Times,* as we pointed out in an earlier article, usually merely "covers" books as it would news events; while the editors

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of the *Saturday Review* are of so benign and uncritical a habit of mind that their opinions would scarcely disturb a publisher. Both of these periodicals have throughout the depression grown a little more kindly, but unlike *Books* they are not psychopathically antipathetic to unfavorable reviews. They have, however, resorted to other measures to keep pace with *Books*. The *Saturday Review* now gives out to booksellers a small rack with a place in the middle for the current *Saturday Review* and a place on each side for the display of two books reviewed in its pages. The *Times* has but lately introduced its own tabulated report from American booksellers. It also furnishes to publishers small cards to be inserted in new books, asking the book buyer what review inspired him to purchase the book. The *Times* tabulates the information received and issues it in pamphlet form to publishers. Naturally, the *Times'* book reviews lead all the rest in sales appeal.

The pressure which such sales devices must inevitably bring to bear upon reviewing is apparent. Booksellers are not interested in distributing among their customers or displaying in their windows a weekly literary supplement in which unfavorable reviews predominate. Whether or not the attempts on the part of the *Times* and the *Saturday Review* to compete with *Books* presage an era in which reviewing in the literary weeklies will have become merely a branch of advertising it is impossible to tell. Certainly, the publishers themselves are well aware of the growing benevolence of the critical brotherhood. An amusing advertisement by Coward-McCann for "Brassbound," by Mary Bickel, makes this quite clear.

> Book reviewers are optimists, turning on the adjectives at the slightest provocation. But book *sellers* are hard-boiled. . . . To rate a kindly adjective from a book *seller* a book must be way up in the stratosphere.

An examination of criticism in America today indicates that criticism is healthiest where it is farthest removed from publishers' advertising. *The Nation* and the *New Republic,* if they are in some cases a little stodgy, make a genuine attempt to maintain critical standards. The *New Masses,* for all its errors, is vigorous. These periodicals carry some advertising—not much. In the quarterlies—the *Yale Review,* the *Virginia Quarterly,* the defunct *Symposium* and *Hound and Horn*—none of which carries or carried advertising, some of the most independent criticism has been written. Unfortunately, these publications, removed as they have been from advertising, are also removed from mass circulation, and the criticism, therefore, though good, has been stylistically academic. During the last ten years in America criticism has been only sporadically interesting. Edmund Wilson, Joseph Wood Krutch, Rebecca West, Frances Newman, Louis Kronenberger, Clifton Fadiman, and Robert Morss Lovett have seemed, in varying degrees, perspicacious, but their faint catcalls have been drowned out by the bravos of the publishers' claque. Moreover, none of these critics, with the exception of Mr. Wilson, has made any extended effort to relate what is valuable in modern literature to the body of literature of the past. Really vital criticism will probably not come until genuinely critical and independent minds can somehow communicate unhampered with the vast body of the reading public.

[*This is the last of a series of articles which have appeared every other week in* The Nation.]

Karl Marx

Karl Marx. The Story of His Life. By Franz Mehring. Translated by Edward Fitzgerald. Edited by Ruth and Heinz Norden. Covici-Friede. $5.

WHEN Franz Mehring, the renowned historian of the German Social Democracy, published the first edition of his Marx biography seventeen years ago, it was received as an epoch-making work in the literary history of the international labor movement. By presenting it in Edward Fitzgerald's good translation to the English-speaking world, the publishers have made an important and satisfactory contribution to serious literature. Other biographies of Marx have been written, before and since. But none has given the reader such a wide historic perspective or showed the man in such intimate correlation with the happenings and spirit of his times. Reading Mehring's monumental work one understands that here, with all his failings and personal weaknesses, stands one of the most significant figures the nineteenth century produced.

In the flood of translations from the German which has enriched our literary output during the last decade, there has been no noteworthy contribution from among Mehring's important works. Reading "Karl Marx" again after all these years, one understands the reason. This is no book to be read for amusement or pastime. It will not appeal to that sector of America's reading public which demands of its heroes, past and present, that they be just erratic enough to be interesting and amusing, yet not too far from their own experience to be wholly comprehensible. Karl Marx's faults were not entertaining peccadillos. In a man of lesser stature they would have been intolerable. To those who do not appreciate the stupendous vision of his economic and political interpretations, he may appear as an irascible, intolerant, and not always over-scrupulous bigot.

Karl Marx, the founder of the modern labor movement, came of a family of Jewish patricians. After giving a brilliant account of himself in the University of Jena, he married Jenny von Westphalen, daughter of a small nobleman of modest means, with whom he lived for twenty-four years in one of those rare spiritual unions which surmount all material adversity. At the early age of twenty-four he became a contributor and later the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne. It was his fate even then, says Mehring, to provoke strong reactions from those with whom he came in contact. People served Karl Marx with unselfish devotion or hated him for his faults. These conflicting attitudes toward him produced a chemical reaction without which his genius could not have come to flower.

His activity in Cologne was beset with difficulties. Weary of political persecution he turned his back on Germany in 1843 and went to Paris, where he made a precarious living for himself and his young wife by writing for newspapers and periodicals. In the companionship of Heinrich Heine, Joseph Proudhon, and others he underwent a process of intellectual clarification. Here, too, began his intimacy with Friedrich Engels, whose loyal and understanding friendship was destined to become the foundation of his later personal and intellectual life. In endless stimulating discussions with these new-found friends, half-formed convictions took definite shape. Marx had come to Paris full of vague resentments against a social system the real meaning of which he as yet only dimly perceived. When he turned his face toward London two years later those convictions, to which he devoted a life of restless and tireless energy, had already taken definite form.

To a biographer of Mehring's type this aspect of the man is of minor importance. Himself the typical *streitbare Pro-*

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fessor to whom intellectual polemics are more important than meat and drink, Mehring understands the severity with which Marx dealt with his opponents. Among his contemporaries, bourgeois as well as party comrades, he was respected and feared for his brilliant and devastating satire. To me it seems, indeed, that Mehring's analysis of Marx owes its preeminence to the close similarity in their natures and their outlook on life. Mehring was no whit less ruthless and intolerant in his castigation of the reformists in the German socialist movement of his period than was Marx in his acidulous attacks on the bourgeois democrat, Professor Karl Vogt, or in his—for the most part unjustifiable—aspersions on Michael Bakunin, the Russian revolutionist, or on Ferdinand Lassalle and Johann B. von Schweitzer, the propagandist forerunners of the socialist movement. To both, ideas were a highly personal matter, much more important than accidental personal relationships. Neither found it possible to separate his disapproval of another's ideas from the person who uttered them. Both had that intensely personal relationship to abstractions which expresses itself in violent hatreds and loyalties. To persons who react less violently to the stimuli of ideas, such characters are inexplicable. August Bebel once referred to Mehring (at the Dresden Social Democratic Congress in 1903) as a "psychological riddle," and Otto Rühle, whose biography of Karl Marx aroused a great deal of discussion a few years ago, tried to explain the "contradictions" in the character of the great leader as the products of an underlying psychopathic disturbance.

Lovingly and with infinite patience Mehring follows Marx through the long years of his exile. The task is not an easy one. Which was the real Marx? The heartless fighter who abhorred and decried all sentimentality in the labor movement? The leader of the "Kommunisten Bund" and the First International whose haughty rejection of reformist proposals alienated those worthy people who offered their good-will as a substitute for the proletarian class struggle? Or the loving father, the deeply affectionate husband, the man who inspired a friendship so unselfish that it deserves to stand beside the famous brotherhoods of history and tradition? This ardent socialist, this daring philosopher, says Mehring, was sentimental and modest in his personal relations. When he demanded absolute allegiance it was to the cause, never to himself and his ideas. He himself would have been the last to claim for them the infallibility with which they have since been invested.

A library of hotly contentious literature has been written for and against the Marxian conception of socialism as the next step in social and economic development. Because of it we are inclined to forget that Marx's greatest contribution to modern thought was not that he outlined the way into the future, but that he gave to thinking humanity a touchstone by which all future theories of human development might be tested, that he discovered the great law on which all human change and progress are based. It was Marx who first taught what has since become axiomatic: that human society is built upon the primitive human needs of food, clothing, and shelter; that the methods whereby any given social unit satisfies these needs determines its cultural, political, and social superstructure.

Marxism is no longer an outlaw among social philosophies. Mehring shows how "historic materialism" gained recognition in schools and universities from historians, scientists, and journalists as the one great force in human progress; how the development of capitalist society in the sixty years since Marx first charted its course in "Das Kapital" has followed the economic laws which he, building on the hypothesis of Adam Smith and Ricardo, first propounded.

In Mehring's skilled hands the biography of Marx becomes more than the record of a human life. It is the story of an idea and its induction into the warp and woof of the conscious existence of a new generation. It is too bad that the publishers should have felt the need of an appendix which, by the intolerance of some of its references, detracts from the artistic perfection of this truly remarkable work. LUDWIG LORE

Down with Woollcott

The Woollcott Reader. Compiled by Alexander Woollcott. The Viking Press. $3.

MR. WOOLLCOTT is not only a best-seller in his own right, but with a sentence or two he can make best-sellers of other men. At present he is by far the most influential salesman of books in the United States, and consequently looms larger on the cultural scene than even Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf. Mr. Woollcott's ascendancy means, indeed, death to the Five-Foot Shelf and all its analogues, for Mr. Woollcott is no friend of difficult and stodgy classics: he is skeptical of their worth, or at least of their readability, and prefers the readier laughter and tears of writers not in the pantheon. He has had much to say, here and elsewhere, about the snootiness and pedantry of people who play safe with the names which somehow live on in his despite. If he has not quite aspersed their sincerity, he has wiped up the floor with their sense of humor.

Now there is perhaps no better way of attracting followers than by suggesting that they, like oneself, have a superior sense of humor, and I have no doubt that Mr. Woollcott's ripe appreciation of anecdote has helped pave the way for his dictatorship over literature. But he is by no means one-sided, and if he has a lively turn for laughter, he has an even livelier turn for tears. I even suspect that weepsiness is his true love and that he would rather have a good cry than a good laugh. And I further suspect that literature has no meaning for him beyond providing one or the other.

It is very seldom, of course, that a critic who becomes widely influential with the general public is a good critic. He is usually its superior in articulateness, not acumen. If he has virtues, they are only tolerated for the sake of his vices. Thus Mr. Woollcott's immediate predecessor in the land, Professor Phelps, really liked good books as well as bad, but won his spurs entirely through recommending the bad ones. Professor Phelps's chief critical characteristic is a low boiling-point, so that he is as quickly bathed in steam when reading "Anthony Adverse" as when reading Aeschylus. But Mr. Woollcott is a very different kind of critic. He is vastly harder on dull books than Mr. Phelps, and vastly harder on good books. He does not like a great many things, and all the things he likes have points in common. Thus the prose had better be more like French pastry than bread, the sentiment bountiful and lush, the characters exceedingly wicked or noble or salty, the scene distant if not downright exotic. But Mr. Woollcott will not approve of such productions if there is anything naive or blundering about them: they must be executed with all possible cunning and sophistication. Their true character must not be obvious; it must only steal upon you that they are hokum.

Yet hokum they are, high-grade, streamlined hokum if you will, but hokum. There is not much in "The Woollcott Reader" that any well-known critic of our time except Mr. Woollcott will wish to see preserved. Here is, I say boldly, second-rate taste at its most formidable and deceptive, tricked out in its Sunday best, beckoning and easy to take. It is second-rate in a number of respects, but I am satisfied to rest my case on the fact that there is scarcely a thing in this anthology which does not, at bottom, falsify or run away from life. Like all sentimentalists and easy scoffers, Mr. Woollcott can be quickly spotted as an escapist; and in this compilation of modern writing he has escaped to the strongholds of all those who

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bruise easily and think with difficulty—to the world of children and animals and triflers and people easy to laugh and cry over. I count it of some significance that in a book of 1,011 pages, exactly 72 are laid in the United States. I count it of some significance that in a volume running over with pathos, there is exactly one story that might by any standards be considered to treat of tragedy. I count it of some significance that Mr. Woollcott's leviathan does not include one living writer interpreting the current scene.

It would no doubt be more than enough if Mr. Woollcott sent this book forth to his hundred thousand or so admirers merely with the statement that it contained things which he had enjoyed. But he is at all times the critic: these selections are called "minor masterpieces"; one of them is "as simple and modest and perfect as a Vermeer" and another is "the most moving and uplifting tale ever told in the English language." His critical dicta, furthermore, are set down in a prose which I do not hesitate to describe as nauseating. Mr. Woollcott loves perfumed words, but knows no better how to use them than certain women know how to use an atomizer. This sentence from one of his recent indorsements may indicate what many times awaits a reader of this book: "You, I think, will find Carrie mysteriously warming to the cockles of your foolish heart." When such a writer comes along and compiles such a book as "The Woollcott Reader," I am not afraid to put my own sense of humor to the touch and get up in the pulpit as a reformer. While Rome, by Mr. Woollcott's bland admission, is burning, I should like to see practically everything that he has written and most of what he has compiled and recommended thrown as further fuel upon the conflagration. At least while Rome is burning, let it fumigate.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

warbly same boat

Summer Time Ends. By John Hargrave. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $3.

WITHOUT capitals, without punctuation warbly same boat is a paragraph as well as a phrase, a scrap from a chorus, a fair example of the style, and a statement of the general theme of this book. All of us are in the same boat, in a rotten, leaking tub, loose upon a flood of worthless stock shares and meaningless bank figures, whirling and pitching to certain disaster through a land of plenty on whose shores no landing may be made unless or until Social Credit throws the life line. Specifically the scene is England, where Sir John Jordan, head of the mammoth Soltex combine (whose financial statements will not bear inspection), Lord and Lady Swingletree (she for one brief moment might well be named Chatterley), an author (his brother is an M. P.), an inventor, a physician, the rector of Carton (this is the professional group), Farmer Barrett, George, and Jenny, and their families (unemployed workers) represent the interrelated plight of all classes of society—a desperate country in which the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady have a shocking amount of similarly diseased economic tissue under their sisterly skins.

The dangers of writing novels mainly to show the need for applying an economic doctrine to current material ills are well known. The advanced cases of Marxian fiction are witnesses to the ossification of human beings, the stereotyped plots, and the dearth of interest which can result from the practice. In this case the theory seems to demand fewer strictures, for most notably Mr. Hargrave sustains and exerts his sense of humor and his zest for the variety in his material. His powers of observation are sharp and distinct and fairly free, and he has the gift of selecting and remembering for the record the most telling traits, the most indicative expressions of the vernacular. His characters are characters and types and symbols. They represent certain figures on a chart, but they are also allowed to display some moral and intellectual features which can and do have little to do with the Douglas thesis. In fact, theory rears its naked head only in the final chapter, where in a fine burst of fun and doctrine the climax assumes Shavian proportions.

The book is flashy and readable, but a word of warning is necessary about its loudly proclaimed innovations of style. Much of its interest is achieved by these technical devices. The omission of capitals and periods allows the thought and mood to carry over to the succeeding sentence or to fade out instead of coming to an abrupt stop. The broken rhythm of the prose permits acceleration, retard, accent, and even interpolations without damage to the advance of the narrative. As a means of heightening the effect of tension and contradiction of the things described, it is efficient, and of all the roundly advertised innovations the one least open to question. But search as he may, I doubt if any reader is going to find the symphonic technique or the fourth dimension heralded in announcement and blurb. Clarification of the first point, of the difference between the way prose may be comprehended and the way music composed of more than one theme may be comprehended, would erase much aesthetic confusion from a number of minds besides Mr. Hargrave's. As for the second point, when the book is ended, the fourth dimension still appears a more likely advance for the cinema or painting to make than the novel, and again it is a matter of what words do and do not do as prose. Nor can anyone familiar with the work of Joyce, Pound, Cummings, or Dos Passos greet the compound and compounded words, the various kinds of association, the cut-ins of journalese, advertising, and radio as startlingly new.

Such emphasis only befogs whatever technical issue there is. These things have already become the literary conceits of the first half of the twentieth century, and the chief concern in regard to them is, how well has Mr. Hargrave used them? Do they stick out as affectations and offend as mannerisms, or are they integrated? For one, I find them smoothly welded. Certainly, to imagine the book without them is to imagine a slightly old-fashioned story without any of the imperious, nervous necessity of propaganda. They catch and reflect the temper of the times and seem as fitting as the fact that Mr. Hargrave is the actual leader of the Green Shirts in England today.

FLORENCE CODMAN

Roosevelt as *Rentier*

The Gay Reformer: Profits Before Plenty Under Franklin D. Roosevelt. By Mauritz A. Hallgren. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

THIS is more than an incisive review of the New Deal. It is also an analysis of the Rooseveltian psyche and one in which Mr. Hallgren strives with considerable success to show that the President's Hyde Park background makes it impossible for him ever to be a true champion of the forgotten man. His rearing, Mr. Hallgren argues, has made Roosevelt irrevocably a member of the *rentier* class and psychologically immobilized him against doing anything that would transfer power from the ruling class of finance and industrial capitalists to the workers and the lower middle class, members of which, in the final analysis, also belong to the proletariat.

The *rentier* class, he notes, "prospers only as monoply prospers," for it depends on the income from its investments, which are "to a large extent the very life's blood of the giant

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monopolies." It should be obvious, Mr. Hallgren continues, that the *rentier* class "would not want to see the great industrial and financial combinations taken over by the state or broken up for the benefit of the small capitalists. It would want the state to intervene only to the extent that might be necessary to insure more honest and efficient management of these combinations. It would want the sources of its income safeguarded, perhaps even underwritten, by the state, but certainly not destroyed."

Mr. Hallgren proceeds then to show how closely Roosevelt's White House career has followed that pattern of class interest. There would have been a closer fit, Mr. Hallgren suggests, did not Roosevelt suffer from "an economic illiteracy" that is reflected in his amazing collection of advisers, among whom at one time or another have been "agents of the monopolists and spokesmen of the lower middle class, high protectionists and Manchester liberals, advocates of laissez faire and industrial disciplinarians, classical economists and worshipers at the shrine of Maynard Keynes, internationalists and isolationists, Republicans and Democrats, confessed Fascists and ardent Social Democrats."

Another factor that has prevented a perfect fit is to be found in the irreconcilable confusions of modern capitalism, which Mr. Hallgren epitomizes thus: "Men must be fed, or they may revolt; work must be provided, or the whole machine may break down; but when means of providing work and wages are sought, it is promptly discovered that the only available means are those which threaten the rate of profit, the mainspring of modern capitalism." Roosevelt, he says, has been trying to "recreate in the modern and complex industrial society which is America the pleasant human relationships that exist in the manorial community of Hyde Park"; but his chief business has been tiding American capitalism over "a particularly critical period," and in carrying out that assignment he has "found it impossible to reconcile 'a fair reward' for honest toil with 'fair profits' for the owners and managers of his 'everlasting American system.'"

Mr. Hallgren nails these generalizations down with one spike after another of concrete and carefully documented examples, which he has drawn from very nearly every phase of the New Deal's operations. Most valuable among these, it seems to me, are those that deal with what generally is held to be the most "successful" of the Roosevelt Administration's establishments, the AAA. Mr. Hallgren shows that the AAA has not worked either, and to prove that point he does not need to resort to Marxian dialectic or to any sentimental babblings about the slaughter of hogs' infants.

PAUL W. WARD

Drama

The Unregenerated

ONE of the most popular novels of last year dealt in highly appreciative fashion with humors of a disreputable family. So did one or two others not so widely read, and of course Erskine Caldwell's best-known works go about as far as it is possible to go in the direction of exploiting the more ingratiating aspects of total depravity. Add "Weep for the Virgins," which the Group has just produced at the Forty-sixth Street Theater, and you have almost enough to make a literary movement.

Behind this movement seems to lie a mild sort of protest against the more unusual contemporary attitude toward humble folk. These latter are not, say the mild protesters, completely described when they are set down as the helpless victims of exploitation. They are that no doubt, but they are also some-

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thing more. They are sometimes salty and humorous, lusty and unregenerate. Even decadence is a luxury not the exclusive possession of the upper classes, and it is not necessarily a defense of the capitalist system to exhibit proletarians who manage somehow to assert the human right to be unreasonable, fantastic, and full of flavorsome perversities.

Such at least seems to be one of the rather too many morals suggested by the Group's oddly conceived and oddly named tragi-comedy. A vain and foolish woman married to a shiftless husband imagines that she gave up a promising career for him. Her three daughters work in a nearby cannery, but they have been brought up with the romantic idea that they are intended for better things. One, an affected blonde, is obviously destined for Hollywood. Another, whose real passion is for the food that is making her fat, is assumed to have a talent for tap dancing, while the third is supposed to sacrifice everything for the careers of her two more gifted sisters. Of course men are the great danger, and the daughters are taught to regard them as the natural enemies of their sex. But nature is too strong for art, and to the despair of the mother each ends up in someone's arms—the eldest because she loves her man, the blonde because it seems the only way out of a pressing difficulty, and the tap dancer because she is seduced by the promise of unlimited pork chops and custard pie.

The play was given short shrift in the daily press, and there is no denying its manifold defects. In the first place, the plot wobbles painfully as it pursues its uncertain course. In the second place, the author is never really successful in synthesizing her mood. Some attitude of ironic compassion is obviously intended to unite all the aspects of the piece. Within the scope of that ironic compassion is supposed to be comprehended not only a sympathetic understanding of the essential humanity of the characters but also a comic appreciation of their foibles and a fierce scorn for the tawdriness of the ambitious mother. But not even the Group, whose most characteristic excellence has always been its sense of style, can really impose a unity on the piece. Its elements clash with one another, and one waits in vain for any moment capable of making one feel that even for an instant the author knows what her sum total signifies. Yet the piece is full of amusing bits and enlivened by half a dozen memorable caricatures. No one could possibly call it a well-constructed play, but I am certain that I shall remember some of the persons who inhabit it long after I have completely forgotten what many a well-made piece was about.

To the growing list of hits add "Boy Meets Girl" at the Cort Theater—certainly the most amusing rough-and-ready satire on Hollywood since the days of "Once in a Lifetime." Its authors, Bella and Samuel Spewack, have invented no new form. Their manner is the now familiar high-speed, hard-boiled extravagance which can be so tiresome in, to take a recent example, "Crime Marches On." But they manage it expertly, and they contrive somehow to keep on the right side of the doubtful line which separates hilarious irresponsibility from mere nonsense, and they are consistently funny.

For a limited engagement ending this week Eva LeGallienne is appearing with her company at the Shubert Theater in a repertory of standard plays.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"How Beautiful with Shoes" (Booth Theater) is based on a short story by Wilbur Daniel Steele, but the play, perhaps because of its limited resources, suffers from a lack of complete characterization. The locale is similar to that of "Tobacco Road," but the play seems more like an allegory seen through the eyes of a crazed teacher of English than a realistic picture of the sordid South. Its poetic quality is derived largely from the integration of "A Song of Songs"—a line of which is used as the title of the piece. M. G.

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Films

The Old Days

AFTER his interlude as Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" James Cagney returns in "Frisco Kid" (Strand) to the muscular stuff for which Warner Brothers seem to think God made him. He becomes the toughest customer in San Francisco of the old days—the freshest guy along the Barbary Coast, and until Margaret Lindsay tames him the wildest. The whole thing would be ridiculous were Mr. Cagney not the convincing and attractive actor that he is, with an unusual gift of being able to dominate and authenticate any scene in which the camera finds him. And even then the principal merit of "Frisco Kid" has to do with its success as a costume or period piece. Like "Barbary Coast" it sets out to reconstruct a moment of the American past, and though it is less brilliant than the other film, at several points in its direction it can be said to achieve its end.

The pictures cry to be compared because they furnish so many examples of what the *New Yorker* calls a "funny coincidence." Both of them begin at the water's edge—the harbor is full of fog, and fateful rowboats slip noiselessly on nefarious errands; both of them go in for fights, for shootings, for gaming tables where the dice are loaded, for gilded palaces of sin, and for a sinister criminal element; both of them show a newspaper editor daring to expose the Coast and losing his life after his plant is wrecked; and both of them bring in the vigilantes—big bearded men with deep voices—to hang the leading villains and restore serenity to the town. So it is possible for once to determine which of two directors has done the better job. In this case, I think, the happier artist is Howard Hawks, who accomplishes his results with an economy and a coherence nowhere conspicuous in the work of Lloyd Bacon, whose "Frisco Kid" is by so much inferior to its rival. Nothing in "Frisco Kid" compares with the scene of Knuckle's arrest in "Barbary Coast"—the villain walking erect and ominous through the muddy streets, the vigilantes slipping up to fall quietly into step behind him, and then the whole party marching in rhythm through repeated puddles to the stringing-up place. There is a rightness about this scene, and no one who has watched it will be likely to forget it. For the sake of such things, we must suppose, the cinema was created.

Not only does King Vidor fail to provide any comparable triumph in "So Red the Rose" (Paramount); he fails almost completely to transcend the limitations imposed upon him by the minor quality of Stark Young's romance. The Civil War seems faint and far away—its battles are written on a blackboard between crises in the Bedford household—and while that household is presented with a certain refinement of sentiment, there is a notable lack of vigor in the remaining scenes, particularly those in which stage Negroes sing spirituals and emerge in a decorous flock as if from wings. An anonymous postal card I have received asks me to protest against the picture because it revives old passions. I cannot protest; I missed the passions.

This is as good a place as any to say that the Acme Theater on Fourteenth Street continues to be valuable for its revivals of foreign films; I have recently seen three Eisensteins there and three René Clairs, and I am grateful for an opportunity such as is nowhere else afforded.

MARK VAN DOREN

[*In the issue of January 1 Mark Van Doren will review "A Night at the Opera."*]

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